THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY NATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT STATE

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Amy Goodman
Robert W. McChesney
Makani Themba-Nixon
Rebecca MacKinnon
Paul D. Miller, *aka* DJ Spooky
Lakshmi Chaudhry
Ana Marie Cox
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JULY 3, 2006
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RAGE AGAINST THE (BUSH) MACHINE

Lawrenceville, Ga.

■ Reading your editorial "Songs of Protest" [May 15] I had to chuckle. Did you really refer to the musicians as "courageous"? (I have to look again, just to confirm. OK, you did.) In what way are they courageous? Oh, you mean because they wrote pop lyrics criticizing the President and/or the war? Boy, that *is* courageous (shivers down my spine)—no one else would dare do that. And they did this in America? In *America*? Are you sure? And they got away with it? It's a miracle they survived to collect their gawdy royalties. I'll tell you what courageous would be: an Iraqi singing a Saddam Hussein protest song just four years ago. Or a Cuban singing a song to protest Castro's treatment of gays. Now find me *that* artist, and I'll be the first to call her courageous. (If you need help with her bail or exhumation expenses, just let me know.) Well, I'm inspired by these courageous troubadours of yours. I feel like doing something equally courageous. I think I'll go to the grocery, buy sixteen items and stand in the express checkout lane. Or tip 14 percent the next time I dine out. I'll let you know how it goes, if I survive to tell about it. MARK RILEY

Cicero, Ill.

■ The Dixie Chicks, Neil Young and Pink do deserve credit for adding their voices to the dissent. However, you overlooked an incredible protest song by Dar Williams on her recent album, *My Better Self*. The song is titled "Empire" and its poetic lyrics are some of the most powerful statements I've heard on the policies of the Bush Administration. JERRY GILIO

Heber City, Utah

■ *The Nation* overlooked one of the clearest, most powerful voices against the reactionary policies of Bush and his cronies. Conor Oberst of Bright Eyes has been composing protests for a few years, culminating in his 2005 anthem "When the President Talks to God." To wit: "When the President talks to God,/Does what God says ever change his mind?/Which voter fraud must be concealed, when the President talks to God?/While they pick which countries to invade,/Which Muslim souls still can be saved?/When the President talks to God, does he ever think that maybe he's not?/Does he ever smell his own bullshit when the President talks to God?" JOHN MARK KRENKEL

Newburgh, Ind.

■ How could you omit Steve Earle from the list of artists? Someone needs to listen to the albums *Jerusalem* and *The Revolution Starts Now*. JON ROCHNER

Elmira, NY

■ I was all set to complain that no one ever mentions the punk rockers, who have been singing (or screaming) against Bush since the day he was selected. Then I saw that you named my favorite political band ever, Anti-Flag—a simply fantastic band. Other punk bands that do great political music are NOFX, Bad Religion, Propagandhi and the Descendents. (There's more, but that's a good start.) The album cover for *The War on Errorism* by NOFX is hilarious. TIM COON

Austin, Tex.

■ You *must* include James McMurtry's "We Can't Make It Here." ALAN COOK

Chicago

■ You should also check out "Bring Them Back," written by Mona Abboud and recorded by Chicago actors, singers and musicians. More info: www.bringthembackfromiraq.com. GONZO SCHEXNAYDER

Olmstedville, NY

■ Don't forget Merle Haggard's "America First" (listen and view for free on his website). Maybe a bit nationalistic, but it should help pull some conservative-leaning Americans away from the Bush camp. DUANE RICKETSON

Jackson, Ky.

■ Perhaps Bob Dylan would get involved enough to re-release "Masters of War." I can't think of anything more befitting today. RANDA FRANKS

Hermosa Beach, Calif.

■ You left out an important musical protest. Charlie Haden and the Liberation Music Orchestra recorded the album *Not in Our Name* in 2004 and have recently toured the nation presenting that music. The Liberation Music Orchestra, composed of top-drawer jazz musicians, reforms whenever there is an urgent need to speak out. They made their first album in 1969 to speak against the Vietnam War, the second in 1982 about El Salvador, the third in 1989 about Bush Senior and the most recent about Iraq and The Shrub. The music is beautiful, emotional, powerful and haunting—no words necessary. All four albums are a must-listen for us antifascists. NEIL GRETSKY

Falls Church, Va.

■ You made one unforgivable omission: Radiohead's explosive "2+2=5 (The Lukewarm)" from their 2003 album *Hail to the Thief*. Frontman Thom Yorke was frantically shouting "You have not been/paying attention" long before some of the bands you mentioned spoke out against the Iraq War. JACOB FAWCETT

YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF NERVE

Richard Goldstein's May 15 cover story, "Satellite Dylan, From Icon to DJ," aroused admiration and ire. It was characterized as "condescending," "respectful," "sanctimonious," "admiring," "moronically reductive," "making fine points," "fair-minded," "misguided" and "crap."
—The Editors

Gualala, Calif.

■ Not every middle-aged white guy who likes Dylan's music, even in its more recent incarnations, reveres him as some kind of guru, leader, "icon," role model or instructor in how to live or think about one's life. Some people enjoy Dylan's sound, his range, his wit, his artistic integrity and his indifference to the praise or disdain of critics. STEPHEN KESSLER

Brooklyn, NY

■ Bob Dylan "hasn't had much influence on literature. Few contemporary poets write like him," says Richard Goldstein. He might consider asking some major contemporary poets whether or not Dylan has influenced them. I suspect he'd be surprised by their answers.

And beyond the poets, he may want to reread much of the fiction that's been written here in America these past forty years or so (Denis Johnson and T.C. Boyle, for starters). Dylan, at his greatest, creates effects that are the equal of many of the greatest poets in the language. Yes, these effects usually derive from the whole package—the music, the whining, the lyrics, the phrasing. And no, the words on the page don't usually suffice. No matter. Dylan quite simply expanded the definition of poetry. His greatest work is alive and well, and eventually the cultural establishment will accept him as the equal of Whitman, Blake, Wordsworth and the rest.

The songwriters of the past forty years have become our national poets—the definition of "poetry" has expanded to re-absorb "song," where it all began in Homer's day anyway. There is simply no way anyone can knock Dylan down to size: For all the missteps of much of his later work (though there have been some wonderful additions as well), for all his inconsistencies and flaws, Dylan's greatest achievements are among the greatest achievements of our age. We're blessed to be alive in the days of Dylan. Go ahead. Call me a hagiographer! BURT SHULMAN

Eugene, Ore.

■ "What do women think of this shit?" asks Richard Goldstein. Well, I can hardly speak

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EDITORIALS

The UN Bites Back

The testy exchange in early June between Mark Malloch Brown, deputy secretary general of the United Nations, and John Bolton, US ambassador to the UN, is a reminder of what a dangerous game the Bush Administration is playing with the world body. Known within the UN as a pro-US Briton, Malloch Brown broke with diplomatic tradition and took his growing frustrations public—an action that likely reflects an awareness that Washington needs the UN more than the other way around right now, and the fact that his tenure will probably end when Secretary General Kofi Annan's term expires in December.

Malloch Brown criticized Washington's hypocritical approach as opportunistically using the UN to advance American interests while failing to stand up for it against its US critics. (He described the Administration as having largely abandoned the public discourse that reaches the American heartland to the UN's "loudest detractors, such as Rush Limbaugh and Fox News.") He also pointed to the impending crisis over UN reform that Bolton's heavy-handed, ideologically driven diplomacy has created.

The crisis stems from White House threats to withhold payment of its UN dues if the body does not adopt its agenda of administrative and managerial reforms. Yet Bolton's diplomacy at the UN has been so hamfisted that he has alienated even many of America's closest allies. According to Malloch Brown, rather than isolating the extremists who oppose reform and building a broad coalition of reform-minded nations, Bolton has reinforced "the widely held perception, even among many US allies, that the US tends to hold on to maximalist positions when it could be finding middle ground." He has thus given the impression that the United States would rather have no reform at all than permit the slightest dilution of its position.

Bolton's reaction to Malloch Brown's speech, which had Annan's support, revealed again how unfit Bolton is for his job. Rather than brushing aside the speech, or seeing it as an effort to gain some credibility with other nations at the UN, Bolton took it as an opportunity to whip up more UN phobia. His first response was to call it "a very, very grave mistake" to "criticize the United States in such a manner" and warned that it would come back to hurt the UN, a statement he later repeated.

This is a childish but empty threat, given how much the United States needs the UN on a range of global issues. As Malloch Brown pointed out, the UN is conducting eighteen peacekeeping operations at lower cost and higher effectiveness than "comparable US operations" in places that affect US interests. Moreover, the UN is critical to the management of Iran's nuclear program and is the first line of US defense on peacekeeping and other issues, including climate change, international terrorism and the spread of infectious diseases like AIDS. And the United States is immersed in widening sectarian violence in Iraq, where it will need the UN's help. Given all that's at stake, the Bush Administration, rather than engaging in reckless UN-bashing, ought to be working to shore up Congressional support for the world body.

Liberal Congress members should make the latest Bolton outburst a test of the Administration's purportedly more pragmatic internationalist approach. If the White House is serious about UN reform, it should replace Bolton, a recess appointee, and announce that it opposes linking payment of UN dues to reform measures. It should do so not only because we're obligated under international and domestic law to pay our dues but also because we can't afford to disrupt the UN's work at this critical time.

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COMMENT

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Bunkum From Benador

WATCH

The neoconservative campaign to equate Iran with Nazi Germany received a setback in May. Bloggers and a few journalists quickly exposed as wholly concocted a story about a new law that would require Iranian Jews to wear yellow insignia. Within days the *National Post* of Canada—founded by disgraced neocon media mogul Conrad Black and now owned by the no less hawkish Asper family—was forced to apologize publicly for its "scoop." But by then the *New York Post*, Rush Limbaugh, the Drudge Report, right-wing blogs and some wire services had picked up the claim, bringing the phony news to millions.

Few ran retractions. And despite the debunking, the story's powerful visual imagery was likely lasting for casual readers. Over headlines blaring IRAN, some papers ran photos of Jews from the Nazi era wearing the yellow stars that separated them from their fellow citizens before their slaughter.

Nevertheless, the debunking exposed the moving parts of a media machine intent on priming the public for war with Iran—as it did earlier with stories about Iraq's nonexistent WMD. Ubiquitous in this campaign, as it was with Iraq, is the PR firm Benador Associates. Its president, Eleana Benador, told me it was her agency that placed the article with the *National Post*. Its stable of writers and activists, a Who's Who of the neocon movement, includes Richard Perle, Michael Ledeen, Frank Gaffney, Charles Krauthammer, Victor Davis Hanson and Iranian exile journalist Amir Taheri—the author of the bogus piece. Even among a crowd notable for wrongheaded analyses, Taheri stands out, with a rap sheet that leaves one amazed that he continues to be published. It is here that the role of Benador is key; the firm gives Taheri a political stamp of approval that provides entree to hawkish media venues, where journalistic criteria are secondary.

It was in 1989 that Taheri was first exposed as a journalistic felon. The book he published the year before, *Nest of Spies*, examined the rule and fall of the Shah of Iran. Taheri received many respectful reviews, but in *The New Republic* Shaul Bakhash, a reigning doyen of Persian studies, checked Taheri's footnotes. Suddenly a book review became an investigative exposé. Bakhash, a history professor at George Mason University and a former fellow at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study, detailed case after case in which Taheri cited nonexistent sources, concocted nonexistent substance in cases where the sources existed and distorted the substance beyond recognition when it was present. Taheri "repeatedly refers us to books where the information he cites simply does not exist," Bakhash wrote. "Often the documents cannot be found in the volumes to which he attributes them.... [He] repeatedly reads things into the documents that are simply not there." In one case, noted Bakhash, Taheri cited an earlier article of his own—but offered content he himself never wrote in that article. Bakhash concluded that *Nest of Spies* was "the sort of book that gives contemporary history a bad name." In a response published two months later, Taheri failed to rebut Bakhash's charges.

Yet, thanks to Benador and the outlets that publish its writers,

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Taheri survived to publish again. And again. The concoctions continued, with the full knowledge of his enablers. In a *New York Post* column last year, Taheri identified Iran's UN ambassador, Javad Zarif, as one of the students involved in the illegal 1979 seizure of hostages at the US Embassy in Tehran. San Francisco State University professor Dwight Simpson wrote the *Post* politely to request a correction. "This allegation is false," he explained. "On November 4, 1979 [the day of the seizure], Javad Zarif was in San Francisco. He was then a graduate student in the Department of International Relations of San Francisco State University. He was my student, and he served also as my teaching assistant."

"The newspaper didn't print the letter, and I never got an acknowledgment," Simpson told me. When an Iranian friend of Simpson's, Kaveh Afrasiabi, called Eleana Benador about the error, she initially promised to seek a retraction from Taheri if he faxed her Simpson's letter, Afrasiabi related. When he followed up, "she became hysterical," he said. And when Afrasiabi called Taheri himself, "he hung up on me."

Taheri was unreachable by phone. But Benador, who said her client was "traveling in the Middle East," was impatient with dissections of his work. Terming accuracy with regard to Iran "a luxury," she said, "My major concern is the large picture. Is Taheri writing one or two details that are not accurate? This is a guy who is putting his life at stake." She noted that "the Iranian government has killed its opponents." Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad "says he wants to destroy Israel. He says the Holocaust never happened.... As much as being accurate is important, in the end it's important to side with what's right. What's wrong is siding with the terrorists."

Taheri might seem to be one of Benador's biggest liabilities. In fact, he is right now the agency's proudest coup. On May 30—just days after the *National Post*'s apology for running his false story on Iranian Jews—Taheri was one of a group of "Iraq experts" brought to the White House to consult with George W. Bush on the disastrous situation there. Who needs Hill & Knowlton when you've got Benador Associates? LARRY COHLER-ESSES

Larry Cohler-Esses is editor-at-large for the Jewish Week *of New York.*

Burning Cole

Neoconservatism is an elite calling. It thrives in think tanks, not union halls; its proponents want most of all to influence the powerful. No wonder Ivy League labels have always been important to neocons. This fixation on intellectual prestige explains the recent neocon uprising over the possibility that Juan Cole, scholar and blogger, would become a Yale professor. It was one thing for Cole to hold forth from the University of Michigan, where he has been a professor for twenty years. But Yale would provide "honor" and "imprimatur," says Scott Johnson, a right-wing blogger. "That's a huge thing, to have them bless all his rantings on that blog."

On June 2 Johnson broke the story (on powerlineblog.com) that Yale's Senior Appointments Committee had the day before rejected Cole after three other Yale committees had signed off on him. By then a process that usually takes place behind closed doors had become thoroughly politicized by the right. "I'm saddened and distressed by the news," John Merriman, a Yale history professor, said of the rejection. "I love this place. But I haven't seen something like this happen at Yale before. In this case, academic integrity clearly has been trumped by politics."

The controversy erupted this spring after two campus periodicals reported that Cole was under consideration by Yale for a joint appointment in sociology and history. In an article in the *Yale Herald*, Campus Watch, a pro-Israel group that monitors scholars' statements about the Middle East, was quoted as saying that Cole lacked a "penetrating mind," and suggesting that Yale was "in danger of sacrificing academic credibility in exchange for the attention" Cole would generate. Alex Joffe, then the director of Campus Watch, told me Cole "has a conspiratorial bent...he tends to see the Mossad and the Likud under his bed." For its part, the *Yale Daily News* twice featured attacks on Cole by former Bush Administration aide Michael Rubin, a Yale PhD associated with Campus Watch and the American Enterprise Institute. In an op-ed Rubin wrote, "Early in his career, Cole did serious academic work on the 19th century Middle East.... He has since abandoned scholarship in favor of blog commentary."

Academics dispute this. They say that Yale was drawn to Cole by top-rank scholarly achievement. He is president of the Middle East Studies Association, speaks Arabic and Persian, and has published several books on Egyptian and Shiite history. "We were impressed with Cole's scholarly work, and a wide set of letters showed that he is also highly regarded by other scholars in the field," says political science professor Frances Rosenbluth, a member of the Yale search committee that chose Cole. Zachary Lockman, an NYU Middle Eastern studies professor, says, "It's fair to say he is probably among the leading historians of the modern Middle East in this country." Joshua Landis, a professor at University of Oklahoma, describes Cole as "top notch."

"He was the wunderkind of Middle East Studies in the 1980s and 1990s," Landis says. "He can be strident on his blog, which is one reason it is the premier Middle East blog.... [But] Juan Cole has done something that no other Middle East academic has done since Bernard Lewis, who is 90 years old: He has become a household word. He has educated a nation. For the last thirty years every academic search for a professor of Middle East history at an Ivy League university has elicited the same complaint: 'There are no longer any Bernard Lewises. Where do you find someone really big with expertise on many subjects who is at home in both the ivory tower and inside the Beltway?' Today, Juan Cole is that academic."

Of course, Cole is on the left, while Lewis is a neoconservative. And it is hard to separate Cole's scholarly reputation from his Internet fame. Cole started his blog, Informed Comment, a few months after September 11. He quickly became the leading left blogger on terrorism and the Middle East, delivering every day, often by translating from Arabic newspapers. He could discuss the pros and cons of, say, an invasion of Iraq with complete authority. Here, for instance, are some of his writings in the lead-up to war: "The Persian Gulf is the site of two-thirds of the proven petroleum

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COMMENT

reserves in the world. Yet the countries along its littoral have no means of providing security to themselves.... The two exceptions here are Iran and Iraq.... Iraq did so badly in the Iran-Iraq war, however, that it left itself without credibility as security provider in the region. It also was left deeply in debt." A US invasion "will inevitably be seen in the Arab world as a neo-colonial war.... The final defeat of the Baath Party will be seen as a defeat of its ideals, which include secularism, improved rights for women and high modernism. Arabs in despair of these projects are likely to turn to radical Islam as an alternative outlet for their frustrations."

At times, his voice rose.

"The idea that terrorists willing to commit suicide will be afraid of the US after it invades Iraq is just a misreading of human nature," he wrote in 2003. "If the US really wanted to stop terrorism, it would invade the West Bank and Gaza and liberate the Palestinians to have their own state and self-respect."

Israel's treatment of Palestinians has always been important in Cole's reading of the Middle East. Naturally, Israel is central to neocons, too. Michael Rubin accused Cole of missing the good news from Iraq and of being anti-Semitic. That charge was soon taken up in the *Wall Street Journal* and in the *New York Sun*. "Why would Yale ever want to hire a professor best known for disparaging the participation of prominent American Jews in government?" wrote two *Sun* authors. One of them, according to Scott Johnson, was a student of Alan Dershowitz's at Harvard. The other is Johnson's daughter, Eliana, then a Yale senior. After that article, Johnson, a Minneapolis lawyer and Dartmouth grad, wrote up the case on his blog, which describes itself as a friend of Israel, and attacked Cole as a "moonbat."

Alex Joffe denies that a network went after Cole. "There wasn't any organized opposition. It was a question of people becoming aware of it somehow and each getting in his two cents." Asked about pot-stirrers, Johnson says, "I think if you look anywhere but Yale, you'd be making a mistake."

CALVIN TRILLIN

After Forty-one Suicide Attempts At Guantánamo Bay, Three Prisoners Manage to Kill Themselves

Our allies say that Gitmo should be closed,
In time, George Bush has said, that's our ambition.
In time, of course, if things get any worse,
It may just close itself down by attrition.

Well, if this isn't a network, neither are the professionals who exchange cards at New York parties. Joel Mowbray, a *Washington Times* columnist who has assailed the consideration of Cole, sent a letter to a dozen Yale donors, many of them Jewish, warning of Cole's possible appointment. According to the *Jewish Week*, "Several faculty members said they had heard that at least four major Jewish donors...have contacted officials at the university urging that Cole's appointment be denied." Still, Johnson's point is well taken. It must have been Yale insiders who got the news out to Cole's enemies, as Cole's appointment passed one after another of several institutional hurdles. The vote in the history department was said to be 13 to 7 with three abstentions (which count as no). This signaled unusual opposition to an appointment recommended by an interdisciplinary search committee. Yale's history department includes prominent supporters of the Bush international agenda like John Gaddis and Donald Kagan.

After Cole's defeat, Rubin suggested that Yale now had an opportunity to hire a real talent, someone at the level of, say, Aaron Friedberg, a professor of politics and international affairs at Princeton. Who is Friedberg? A former national security aide to Vice President Cheney through the first two years of the war that the-network-that-is-not-a-network wanted to get us into. Having a role in the greatest foreign-policy disaster of our generation is evidently a worthy credential in academia. Douglas Feith, after all, is about to join the Georgetown faculty.

As Scott Johnson notes, the left didn't care about Cole's appointment as much as the right. (Maybe because the left values his blog, which an Ivy League job might have cut in on.) In retrospect, though, it is appalling to consider what was done to Cole's reputation over this blue-chip appointment.

Cole chose not to discuss the process publicly while it was happening. "I think that a hiring process in academia is a professional matter," he told me. But he also said that Yale sought him out, and that the vilification process was orchestrated. "There were clearly phone calls amongst the persons doing it." The *Yale Herald* quoted two Michigan students one of whom had visited him at his office in Ann Arbor and questioned his openness to Jews. "I am frankly suspicious," Cole says. "How did [the *Herald*] track down these students?"

Lockman, Cole's fellow Middle Eastern scholar at NYU (speaking for himself only), finds the process fearful. "Since September 11 there has been a concerted effort by a small but well-funded group of people outside academia to monitor very carefully what all of us are saying, ready to jump on any sign of deviation from what they see as acceptable opinion. It's an attack on academic freedom, and it's not very healthy for our society."

Cole declined to talk about his feelings on losing the job. Still, the pain came through in his comments. Modern Middle Eastern studies has always been politicized, he says. He jumped into the blogosphere for a simple reason, to counter the common assertion that the Israeli occupation had nothing at all to do with the 9/11 attacks. "I'm from a military family. I had two cousins working in the Pentagon that was attacked. So this was personal to me. My country had been attacked. The mistreatment of the Palestinians and the high-handed policies of the Israeli right were deeply implicated in the attacks. I was angry.

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The Devil Weed and Harry Anslinger

Harry J. Anslinger, a former railroad cop and Prohibition agent, is almost single-handedly responsible for outlawing marijuana. A law-and-order evangelist -- one biographer called him "a cross between William Jennings Bryan and Reverend Jerry Falwell"--Anslinger believed that alcohol prohibition could have succeeded if only the penalties had been tougher.

When he was named America's first drug czar in 1930 Anslinger initially tried to keep the Bureau of Narcotics clear of the marijuana issue because he knew eradication would be impossible. The stuff grows, he said, "like dandelions." But in the budget squeeze of the Great Depression he decided to create a little excitement by transforming marijuana from a low grade nuisance into an evil "as hellish as heroin." To add a little spice he played the race card.

"Reefer makes darkies think they're as good as white men," said Anslinger, **"...the primary reason to outlaw marijuana is its effect on the degenerate races."** To make sure nobody missed the point he offered this profile of the average toker: **"... most are Negroes, Hispanics, Filipinos, and entertainers. Their Satanic music, jazz, and swing, result from marijuana use. This marijuana causes white women to seek sexual relations with Negroes, entertainers, and any others."**

Most Americans had never heard of the weed. Clearly Congress hadn't either. The transcript of the 1937 Congressional Hearings on the Taxation of Marihuana are "near comic examples of dereliction of legislative responsibility," according to one legal observer. The principal witness was Commissioner Anslinger and his evidence consisted of newspaper clippings. The solitary medical expert, Dr. William Woodward of the American Medical Association, undermined Anslinger's testimony by pointing out that the facts in these newspaper clippings had originated with the Commissioner himself.

But the hour was late and it was time to move on. In a vote they didn't bother to record, on a matter of little interest, a handful of Congressmen forwarded a bill that would one day fill the nation's prisons to the roof beams.

Common Sense for Drug Policy
www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org www.DrugWarFacts.org
www.ManagingChronicPain.org www.MedicalMJ.org
www.TreatingDrugAddiction.org
info@csdp.org

Text excerpted from Drug Crazy, Mike Gray, Random House 1998

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COMMENT

"I knew when I began to speak out that I wasn't going to be hired. I knew my academic career was over. I knew that I can be in this place, be a professor of Middle Eastern studies at the University of Michigan for the rest of my life. But I would never be a dean. I would never be a provost. I would never be in the Ivy League. I'm not surprised. I'm not upset. Actually, the bizarre thing is that Juan Cole was considered by Yale in the first place."

PHILIP WEISS

Philip Weiss is the author of American Taboo: A Murder in the Peace Corps *(Harper Perennial).*

Danger in Paradise

Oahu, Hawaii

Along Oahu's Waianae coast, it's hard to tell whether the United States is conducting a war against terror or against the district's impoverished Native Hawaiians, the state's poorest, unhealthiest and least-educated citizens. The Army has for decades conducted live-fire training in the majestic valley of Makua, a green cathedral buttressed by ridges, flaring open from the mountains to the sea. During World War II the military evicted the mostly Hawaiian landowners. For decades, Malama ("Care For") Makua, a nonprofit group, has sought to stop the training, which has ignited wildfires in an area rich in endemic species and ancient cultural sites. Waianae residents worry that toxic chemicals are polluting their air, water and fish. "My goal is to get the military out of Makua and help the land to heal," says Manu Kai'ama, whose great-great-grandfather was evicted by the Army.

In early 2001 Malama Makua and Earthjustice won an injunction against live-fire training until the Army filed an environmental impact statement (EIS). After the September 11 attacks the groups agreed to allow limited live-fire training for three years. In February 2006 Federal District Judge Susan Oki Mollway denied the Army's request for an extension, rejecting its claim that it lacked alternative sites to train soldiers who are to be sent in August from Schofield Barracks in Oahu to Iraq.

This small victory may seem insignificant, but it was hard fought and has widespread implications for the many other locales in which citizens are trying to stop a rampant military grab for island resources. These include plans to seize 25,000 acres on Oahu and 23,000 on the Big Island for training Stryker Brigades. (A Stryker EIS was filed, but training has been delayed pending a 9th Circuit Court decision on an Earthjustice challenge.) A Star Wars missile facility is sited on Kauai, and the University of Hawaii is considering a Navy-affiliated weapons research center on campus. Another Waianae valley, Lualualei, is occupied by a Navy surveillance facility. "We're downwind of their million-watt antennas, their ordnance burning, their chemical weapons residue and depleted uranium shell fragments," says Sparky Rodrigues, executive director of Malama Makua.

DMZ Hawaii (dmzhawaii.org), a coalition of Native Hawaiian and environmental groups, is forming alliances with citizens of the Philippines, Guam, South Korea and Okinawa seeking to reduce the expanding military presence in the Asia-Pacific region. Commenting on the Pentagon's 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review*, Michael Klare, professor of peace and world security at Hampshire College, says, "Preparing for war with China...is to be the future cash cow for the giant US weapons-making corporations in the military-industrial complex." He points to the *QDR*'s call for "a stiffening of present US combat forces in Asia and the Pacific" and the Navy's plans for "its most extensive military maneuvers in the Western Pacific since the end of the Vietnam War."

Hawaii receives more military spending per capita than almost any other state, thanks to Senator Dan Inouye, senior member of the Senate defense appropriations subcommittee. But all this spending isn't benefiting Native Hawaiians. Thirty percent of Waianae students who enter high school do not make it to graduation. Those who do, lacking job prospects or funds for college, tend to enter the military, Rodrigues says, adding that a lot of returned veterans are homeless. All along the fifteen miles of Waianae's bucolic coastal strip, the colorful tents of homeless families line nearly every beach but Nenehu, which sports a tidy colony of R&R cottages. Economics, says Rodrigues, "is where the military has tremendous impact—they get a cost of living allowance, and military dependents compete not only for homes but for work." He points to a new subdivision. These new homes are being bought by military contractors and retirees, who are beginning to dominate community boards, making Hawaiians feel disenfranchised as well as dispossessed, Rodrigues says.

Makua is part of the Hawaii Kingdom's ceded lands, which the state holds in trust for Native Hawaiians and has leased to the federal government for a mere $1 for sixty-five years. To preserve this status quo against challenges by Hawaiian sovereignty groups, the state and its Congressional delegation are trying to get Hawaiians recognized as a Native American tribe, which would have the effect of securing military occupation of the ceded lands in perpetuity. During public hearings for the Makua EIS, goodwill has developed between the community and Col. Howard Killian, garrison commander at Schofield. "We would like to open the valley as much as we can—it is a beautiful place," Killian says. Unfortunately, he'll be rotated out in a year. When asked where he plans to retire, "Hopefully, Hawaii," he says. By then, though, he may be disappointed by the ruin of the natural beauty he has come to love.

"The Army promised to give Makua back after the war," says Terri Keko'olani of DMZ Hawaii. "But by now we have to ask, Which war?"

MINDY PENNYBACKER

Mindy Pennybacker is editor of The Green Guide *(thegreenguide.com).*

ON THE WEB: In a Father's Day homage, Forrest Church reflects on Frank Church's high-minded politics and their relevance today. Karl Rove leaked classified information about Valerie Plame; David Corn says the lack of an indictment means only that the prosecutor decided he didn't have an air-tight case. Jeremy Brecher and Brendan Smith report on Lieut. Ehren Watada's refusal to obey orders to deploy to Iraq.

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

The Hot Air Factory

Thank God Rove is not to be indicted, so the left will have to talk about something else for a change. As a worthy hobbyhorse for the left, the whole Plame scandal has never made any sense. What was it all about in the first analysis? Outing a CIA employee. What's wrong with that?

Rove has swollen in the left's imagination like a descendant of Père Ubu, Jarry's surreal monster. There was no scheme so deviously diabolical but that the hand of Rove could not be detected at work. Actually, the man has always been of middling competence. He makes Dickie Morris look like Cardinal Richelieu. Since 9/11 where has been the good news for the Administration? Under Rove's deft hand George W. Bush has been maneuvered into one catastrophe after another. Count the tombstones: "Bring it on," "Mission Accomplished," the sale of US port management to Arabs. It was Rove who singlehandedly rescued the antiwar movement last August by advising Bush not to give Cindy Sheehan fifteen minutes of face time at his ranch in Crawford.

And when Rove's disastrous hand is wrenched from the steering wheel, it passes to another bugaboo of the left, in the form of Dick Cheney. It was the Vice President who gave Jack Murtha traction last November when the Democrats were trying to cold-shoulder the author of the only decent political initiative to have come from their ranks since the election of 2004. In his wisdom the draft-dodging Cheney insulted the bemedaled former Marine drill instructor as having no "backbone" and, via a White House spokesman, as being a clone of Michael Moore. He had to apologize three days later.

Rove and Cheney, the White House's answer to Bouvard and Pécuchet, have driven George Bush into the lowest ratings of any American President. Yet the left remains obsessed with their evil powers. Is there any better testimony to the vacuity and impotence of the endlessly touted "blogosphere," which in mid-June had twin deb balls in the form of the Yearly Kos convention in Las Vegas and the Take Back America folkmoot of "progressive" Democrats in Washington, DC?

In political terms the blogosphere is like white noise, insistent and meaningless. But MoveOn.org and Daily Kos are now hailed as the emergent form of modern politics, the target of an excited article by Bill McKibben in *The New York Review of Books*.

Beyond raising money swiftly handed over to the gratified veterans of the election industry, both MoveOn and Daily Kos have had zero political effect, except as a demobilizing force. The effect on writers is horrifying. Talented people feel they have to produce 400 words of commentary every day, and you can see the lethal consequences on their minds and style, which turn rapidly to slush. They glance at the *New York Times* and rush to their laptops to rewrite what they just read. Hawsers to reality soon fray and they float off, drifting zeppelins of inanity.

Take Truthout.com, the site identified with William Rivers Pitt and Mark Ash. After months and months of obsessive bloggings about the Plame scandal, Truthout contributor Jason Leopold declared May 13 that Karl Rove had been indicted on charges of perjury and lying to investigators. Leopold cited "sources" averring that prosecutor Fitzgerald had met for fifteen hours with Rove's lawyer, Robert Luskin, and that Rove had told Bush and his chief of staff, Joshua Bolten, that he was about to be indicted.

In the days that followed came immediate, categorical denials from Rove's lawyer and the White House. The week progressed with no indictment. It looked as though Truthout would have to sponge the egg off its face. Truthout did nothing of the sort, insisting as vehemently as any lunatic claiming abduction by aliens that they stuck by their story. On June 12 Leopold even raised the ante: "Four weeks ago, during the time when we reported that White House political adviser Karl Rove was indicted for crimes related to his role in the leak of covert CIA operative Valerie Plame Wilson, the grand jury empaneled in the case returned an indictment that was filed under seal in US District Court for the District of Columbia under the curious heading of Sealed versus Sealed." This, Leopold wrote, could well mean the Rove indictment.

Rarely has a story been more swiftly and conclusively undercut. Later that day prosecutor Fitzgerald formally advised Rove's lawyer that he did not anticipate seeking charges against Rove. Truthout's reaction? On June 13 Truthout's chief editor, Mark Ash, told a reporter that they were sticking by their story, and that Rove's non-indictment was "directly contradicted by the information we have."

Welcome to blog world. They're loonies, beyond any sanction or reproof by reality. These people are going to stop a war, change the direction of our politics? They make Barbra Streisand sound like Che Guevara.

At the Kos convention, if we are to believe—which I do—the hilarious reports by Michael J. Smith on our *CounterPunch* site, the ugly matter of the war in Iraq was scarcely raised, as the Kosniks reserved the surge of their passion for... Joe Wilson, husband of Valerie Plame.

In Washington the Pwogs sported all the usual suspects talking about "Taking Back America." There was no spot for Jack Murtha. The war in Iraq was barely on the Take Back formal agenda. It slunk into one panel on the last day, featuring—who else—Joe Wilson. Meanwhile, there are lines around the block for Al Gore's movie about global warming. Can we "take back" the weather? Of course not, unless by pharmaceutical means. The FDA has given final approval to GlaxoSmithKline to launch Wellbutrin XL, to combat "seasonal affective disorder." Is there any good political news? Though he has suspended his bid for now, it looks as though Jack Murtha will still challenge Steny Hoyer for the post of Democratic leader if the Dems recapture the House in November. This would be an encouraging prospect. But this is the party that couldn't pick up Duke Cunningham's seat in Southern California, after the Dukester donned his prison overalls. ■

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KATHA POLLITT

Prairie Grass Roots

For more than thirty years, opposition to legal abortion has nourished right-wing politics at the grassroots. The right, you see, never got the memo about abortion being a trivial "cultural" issue, or the one about how a strong uncompromising position would alienate potential recruits. Liberals got those memos. Liberals got other ones too, and not just on abortion: Don't bother with small rural conservative states. Build big top-down Beltway organizations that don't give members much to do except send money and e-mail their Representatives. Focus on the national picture—the White House, Congress and, above all, the courts.

The result of those unfortunate priorities is on flaming display in South Dakota, where in February the State Legislature passed a ban on abortion that criminalized the practice for any reason but to save the woman's life—no exception for rape, incest, health or fetal anomaly, even those incompatible with life, like anencephaly, in which most or all of the fetus's brain is missing. Showing the strength of antichoice sentiment, Republican Governor Mike Rounds, who in 2004 had vetoed a similar bill, signed this one. The state's largest newspaper, the *Argus Leader*, announced in an awkward editorial statement that it would take no position on the ban. Given that this was probably the only chance editorial board members will ever have to stand in the national spotlight, you know that had to hurt.

Bitter jokes about Jesusland flew around the East and West coasts; some even muttered about boycotting the state. (Take that, Mount Rushmore! And Fluffy, no more Iams for you!) But then a funny thing happened. South Dakotans got busy. Instead of challenging the ban in court, prochoicers decided to challenge it in the voting booth. Relying entirely on volunteers, the bipartisan South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families got more than 38,000 signatures for its petition to place a ban-repeal referendum on the November ballot—twice as many names as required, from every county in the state, and a month ahead of the filing deadline. You may have read of Cecilia Fire Thunder, president of the Pine Ridge Reservation, who got quite a bit of media and blog attention after she said she would consider putting a clinic on the reservation if the ban took effect. But did you know that, spurred by the ban, an unprecedented number of Native American women—Charon Asetoyer, Faith Spotted Eagle, Theresa Spry, Paula Long Fox, Diane Kastner—ran for state and local offices in the June 6 primary? All were progressive, all prochoice.

So far results are decidedly mixed. In a move that was probably more about tribal politics than abortion, Fire Thunder was suspended by the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council, which passed a measure banning abortion on the reservation. Asetoyer and Spotted Eagle lost their races. But Spry and Kastner won, and so did Long Fox—by two votes. Despite the high stakes, turnout was low. One can't help wondering what would have happened if the state Democratic Party had put some energy into getting out the vote (state chair Judy Olson Duhamel wasn't even in South Dakota on primary day; she'd gone to Washington). Still, when I spoke with Asetoyer by phone, she was upbeat, citing the election of Sharon Drapeau, a Yankton Sioux, to the Charles Mix County Commission. "It took two defeats and a federal civil rights suit, but she finally won, and she'll make a big difference. And next time Native Americans will say, We can do this!"

Antichoicers are hardly quaking in their boots. Four Republican legislators who had voted against the ban were defeated in the primaries by pro-ban challengers. No pro-ban incumbents lost their races—not even State Senator Bill Napoli, best known for his speculations on the sort of woman who might successfully invoke the life exception: "A real-life description to me would be a rape victim, brutally raped, savaged. The girl was a virgin. She was religious. She planned on saving her virginity until she was married. She was brutalized and raped, sodomized as bad as you can possibly make it and is impregnated. I mean, that girl could be so messed up, physically and psychologically, that carrying that child could very well threaten her life." Where to begin? Theresa Spry, who will be taking him on in November, has her work cut out for her.

Going the electoral route is risky, to be sure. It will take lots of people power and lots of tact: "It's best to meet people where they are," says Sarah Stoesz, head of the local Planned Parenthood affiliate. "In South Dakota it will come down to fairness for rape and incest victims, to the health issues and to families' right to make their own decisions." A loss in South Dakota would embolden antichoicers everywhere (not that they're shy right now: Louisiana just passed a "trigger ban," which would outlaw abortion immediately if *Roe* is overturned, and Governor Kathleen Blanco, a Democrat, has vowed to sign it; twelve other states are considering bans of their own). But success would be a powerful statement about the limits of antichoice politics. Equally important, the campaign for the referendum, and for prochoice candidates, offers a rare opportunity to change the political discourse in South Dakota. "Sometimes it takes something of great magnitude to get people excited," says Jan Nicolay, co-chair of Healthy Families. As Sarah Stoesz puts it, "You can't build a movement around a lawsuit." Far from being a drag on the progressive movement, reproductive rights can be its catalyst.

Grassroots activism is expensive, and time is short. Send a check to South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families, PO Box 1484, Sioux Falls, SD 57101-1484 (sdhealthyfamilies.org). Support progressive women candidates by donating to Women Run! South Dakota, PO Box 2983, Minneapolis, MN 55402-2983 (www.womenrun.org).

* * *

Virginity or Death! And Other Social and Political Issues of Our Time is a new collection of my *Nation* columns, just out from Random House. It's a very affordable paperback original with a ferocious red, black and white cover and no publicity budget, which is why I'm telling you this. ■

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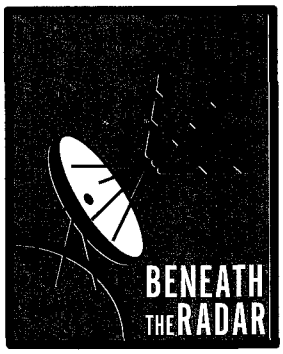
GARY YOUNGE

Rebels With a Cause



Politically speaking, I was born in a black hole. It was January 1969. Less than a year after the student uprisings of 1968 and just six months before Neil Armstrong landed on the moon. Back then I'm sure anything seemed possible. But by the time I had come of age all sense of political possibility had effectively been extinguished. As a 15-year-old in Britain I broke my activist's milk teeth on the miners' strike. My side lost. And for the next ten years, with the exception of the struggle for majority rule in South Africa (a victory we would have to share with our parents), every major progressive battle I was involved in would end in ignominious defeat.

And if the sting of these losses did not suffice, there was also the condescension of my elders to deal with. Those who took to the streets in 1968 would wax wistful for the days when you could picket an embassy, occupy your college, throw some cobblestones at the police and still have change left out of ten bucks. Then they would express their political disappointment in those who were born in '68 for not carrying the torch.

"Youth," wrote German playwright Bertolt Brecht, "is when you blame your troubles on your parents; maturity is when you learn that everything is the fault of the younger generation."

Yet over the past year or so a new generation of activists has emerged on the global stage that has proved itself both sophisticated and extraordinarily effective.

The last few weeks saw more than 700,000 students skip classes in Chile to demand free public transport, lower fees for college entrance exams and greater participation in government. Meanwhile, in France over the past seven months, there have been two episodes of revolt—one of minority youth in the *banlieues* in response to racist policing and discrimination, and the other of students and youth in the city centers against a proposed employment law that would have made young workers more vulnerable to being fired.

Closer to home, there has been the crucial involvement of Latino youth in the demonstrations against the anti-immigrant Sensenbrenner bill. An estimated 70,000 turned out in San Diego County; in Los Angeles County 46,000 students left school over the course of the protests; in Dallas around 3,300 demonstrated. While some briefly stormed City Hall, others stood outside chanting "Viva Latinos, viva Mexico!"

The urge to diminish these protests was irresistible to some. "These kids don't know anything," one radio commentator told Fox News's Bill O'Reilly. Several Congressmen branded them truants, apparently unaware of how much more difficult it would be to stay in school if they or their parents were deported as the legislation suggested. But whatever else these youngsters may have learned in class, they clearly know enough to bring governments to the negotiating table and wrest major concessions from them once there.

In Chile the recently elected socialist president, Michelle Bachelet, offered an extra $200 million for transport, some free lunches, mostly free university entrance exams and the renovation of dilapidated buildings. She also set aside twelve of seventy-three seats for young people on an advisory panel on education—a package the students finally accepted.

In France the first set of riots forced the government to unveil a raft of measures to tackle *banlieue* deprivation. The second, which saw two-thirds of universities occupied, blockaded or closed, hundreds of schools taken over and between 1 million and 3 million in the streets, forced a total climb-down. The concrete outcome of the immigrant rights mobilization is still in the balance, but it gave voice to a dynamic constituency that can no longer be ignored.

These demonstrations were in no way connected. Yet together—with still other recent examples, from pro-reform students holding rallies and clashing with police in Iran, to thousands in Germany protesting tuition fees—they suggest a surge of consciousness, confidence and activism among young people that goes beyond the immediate local demands of each protest. These young people may have grown up in grim times, but unlike my lost generation they have not been schooled in defeat. They are gaining an awareness of their strength at least in part because they have not been taunted by a sense of their weakness.

"I felt pretty good about what we did that day," Edward Chavez, who led a walkout of Bowie high school in El Paso, told the local *Newspaper Tree*. "People come up to me now and ask me when there's going to be another protest. They're ready to march. The Zapatistas are coming to Juárez this summer and we want to take students there to talk to Subcomandante Marcos."

For some from the '68 generation this will, of course, never be enough. "The young people [now] have a negative vision of the future," said Daniel Cohn-Bendit, *aka* Danny le Rouge, who headed the Paris protests almost forty years ago, referring to the most recent student demonstrations in France. "May 1968 was an offensive movement, with a positive vision...but today's protests are all against things. They are defensive, based on fear of insecurity and change."

Cohn-Bendit is right to draw a distinction, but the differences are far from flattering to his generation. The demonstrators today are in general younger, poorer and darker than those of forty years ago. Young women are more likely to take a leadership role; their parents are more likely to support them. These are not middle-class students seeking an alliance with the workers; they are working-class students seeking a share of middle-class entitlement. The chant of Paris '68 was "Under the paving stones, the beach." But these young people have their feet on the ground and know that underneath it there is only more concrete.

"This is not romantic at all," says Karl Stoeckel, the 19-year-old who led the students in Paris recently. "It's important and it's very serious. We are doing this for the future of all the generations who are going to follow us." ■

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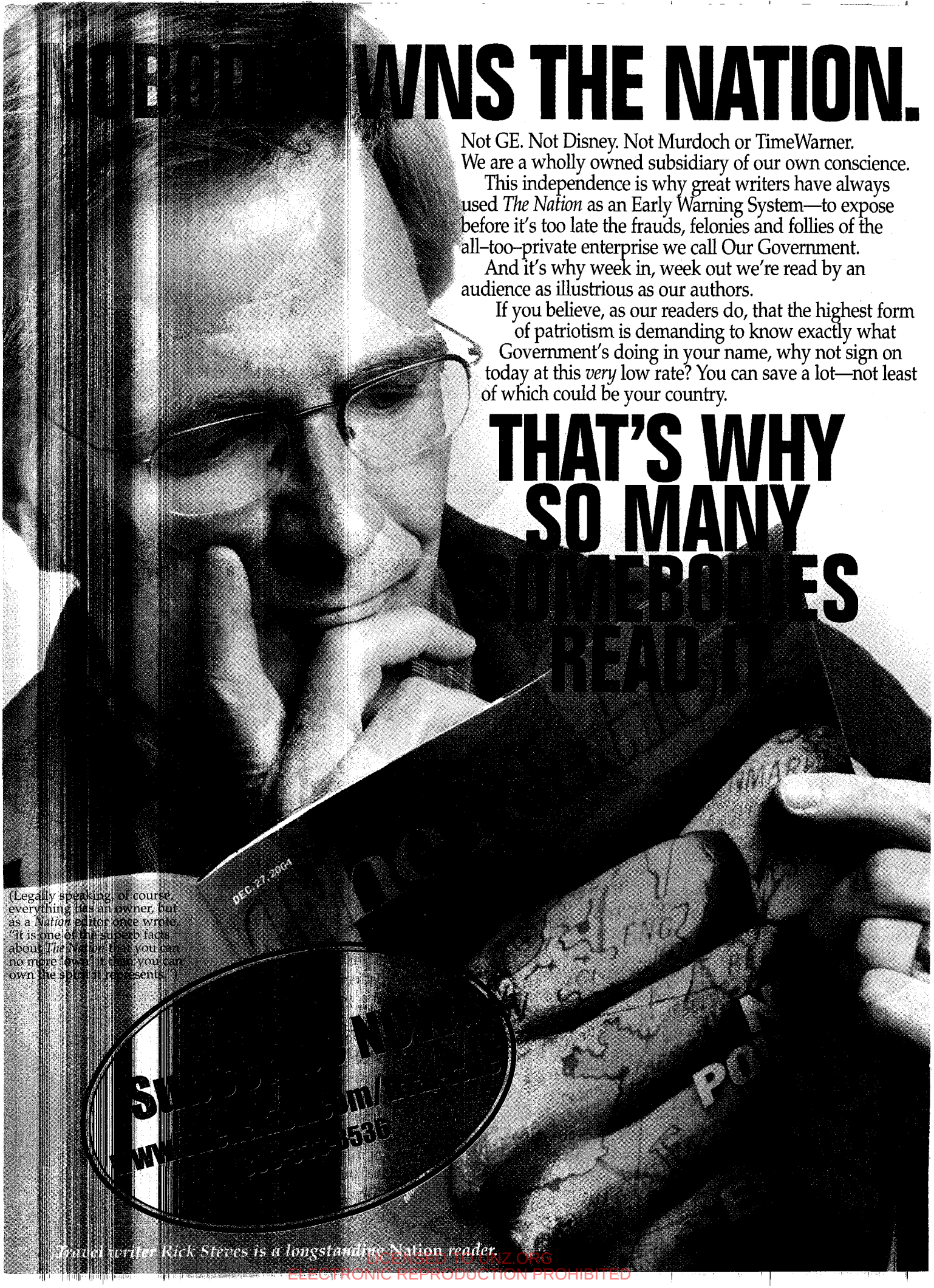

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Travel writer Rick Steves is a longstanding Nation *reader.*

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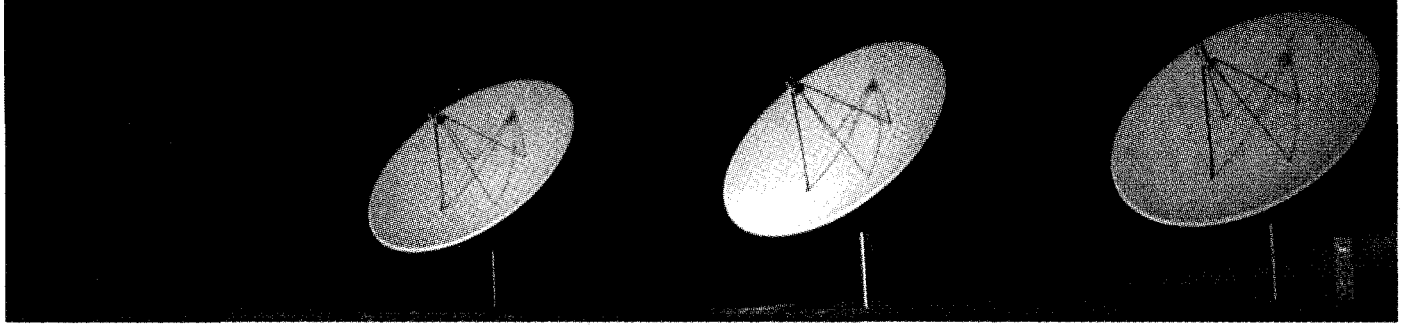
ARTICLES

THE NATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT STATE

SPECIAL ISSUE



Ten years ago, just after the passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, *The Nation* published a special issue on the National Entertainment State. The issue featured a centerfold chart depicting the tentacles of four colossal conglomerates that were increasingly responsible for determining how Americans got their news—Time Warner, General Electric, Disney/Cap Cities and Westinghouse. And essays by Norman Lear, Walter Cronkite and Mark Crispin Miller, among others, looked ahead to a period of no-holds-barred consolidation green-lighted by the new legislation. Today, after a decade of strategic mergers, impulsive couplings and messy divorces—not to mention the birth of "new media" as well as a vigorous media reform movement—the landscape is considerably more complex, though it still bears the oversized footprints of a few giants. This is reflected not only in the detailed fold-out map that appears in this issue but in the range of contributions to this year's forum.

The centerfold is an invitation to step back from the outrage of the moment—be it over Rush Limbaugh's addled ranting, Bill O'Reilly's spin or the White House press corps's inability to distinguish between journalism and stenography—and see the big picture in gruesome detail. It reminds us that while we might hate the rigid recitation of conservative talking points on Fox News programs and love the Internet frontier reached via MySpace.com, both Fox and MySpace are owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation. It tells us that when we are wondering whether we should trust an *NBC Nightly News* report on the greening of nuclear power, it is important to keep in mind that NBC's owner, General Electric, has a more than passing interest in the development and operation of nuclear power plants. And the chart also reminds us that GE owns Universal Pictures and Universal Studios, making it a major player in the creation of the culture—the TV shows and movies—that goes so far to define what Americans think and do.

It is the power that a handful of corporations continue to wield over the media we consume—even the new media of a supposedly liberating Internet—that ought to concern us as citizens. It is not enough to hope that the Internet will set us free. Yes, the World Wide Web is evolving in ways that few anticipated a decade ago, and yes, as the optimism of Markos Moulitsas Zúniga and the skepticism of Mark Crispin Miller illustrate, there are differing views among progressives of what that evolution is likely to mean. It is a good bet, however, that another forum participant, Rebecca MacKinnon, is right when she argues that new-media companies such as Google, Yahoo! and Microsoft will in relatively short order either displace some of the old-media companies on the chart or acquire or merge with them. (Those entities do not appear on this year's chart simply because they do not own major television networks—not yet, anyway—and the Internet has yet to surpass television as Americans' number-one source for news.) But the vast frontiers of new media are being colonized by big players of old media, which just won round one in the fight over "net neutrality" with the House's passage

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Transgressing Distinctions of Gender and Race
Tuesday, August 14, 12:30-2:15 p.m.
Inequalities of race and gender are not only institutionalized in society but are deeply rooted in public and private consciousness. Attitudes toward people in these categories are deeply embedded in our social and political systems. The shifting nature of the collective response to these issues will be addressed by these speakers.

Gloria Steinem

Organizer and Presider: ***Cynthia Fuchs Epstein,*** Graduate Center, City University of New York

Breaking Out of Invisible Prisons. ***Gloria Steinem,*** feminist activist and author

Race and Political Divides. ***Lawrence Bobo,*** Stanford University

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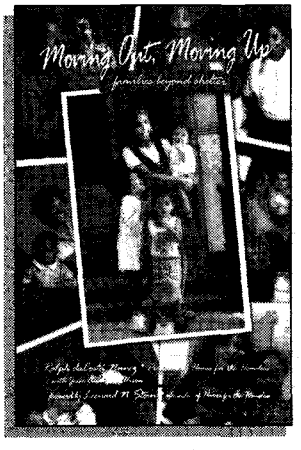
Moving Out, Moving Up
Families Beyond Shelter

By Ralph da Costa Nunez



Moving Out, Moving Up, the second title in ICP's series of homeless narratives, gives readers an inside view of how, given opportunities and skills for advancement, families can lift themselves *up* and *out* of homelessness forever.

"The stories in this book give cause for hope to all of those on the frontlines of the fight against poverty, because they illustrate that change is possible. If you're looking for inspiration, all you have to do is open this book."
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of the COPE Act, legislation that would allow commercial sites to dominate the net. With the FCC preparing another attempt to strike down rules that guard against local media monopolies, we are entering a period of intense struggle over the fundamental questions for both old and new media: Who will own what, and will the rules regulating ownership be written to benefit the owners or the rest of us? The powerhouses of today's National Entertainment State stand ready to answer those questions as they always have, by using all their might to make sure that the new boss is the same as the old boss.

But the past need not be prologue. As Robert W. McChesney, Jeffrey Chester and others explain in this issue, the media reform movement that has taken shape over the past decade can do far more than merely police the margins of this Big Media map. It can, and must, chart a course of activism that makes real the promise of new media, that confronts the problems of old media and that recognizes the necessity of creating genuine diversity of media ownership and communicative opportunity, anchored by civic rather than commercial values. If this movement realizes its potential, the next chart of the National Entertainment State will be a map of our media, not theirs.

ROBERT GREENWALD

A new media era is here. The head of NBC says he is selling to sponsors "on the air, online and on-the-go." "Cross platform" is the term of the day. For progressives and independents, the old hurdles of distribution—erected by the powerful media conglomerates—are giving way to new opportunities. We don't need a billion dollars to buy a network. We don't need hundreds of millions to take over this or that media entity. We have at our disposal a rapidly proliferating array of tools available at low cost to get our messages out—from the Internet to iPods to cellphones and whatever comes next.

At Brave New Films we have committed ourselves to using the new distribution methods to reach untapped audiences. Wal-Mart spends more than $4 million a day on ads. Brave New Films spent relative pennies on our satirical ad promoting *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*; and it was a viral hit, becoming the number-two trailer on iFilm. We used our online expertise (developed in short order over the past four films) and our amazing 150 organizational partners (recruited by our in-house organizer in advance) to solicit and publicize screenings of the DVD in schools, churches, homes, union halls, pizza parlors—any place there was a TV set and a DVD player. We reached 700,000 people in one week with the Wal-Mart film. Likewise, through similar methods, our film *Outfoxed* hit number one on Amazon with zero money spent on traditional ads. Was it easy? No. Can progressives use this model and continue to reach our audience? Absolutely.

Jim Gilliam of Brave New Films has developed a software program, available at BraveNewTheaters.com, that *anyone* can use to host a screening—a political or indie filmmaker, a politician wanting to show a film—anyone who wants to recruit participants for a screening. And it is *free*!

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We also need to put time, energy and resources into *how* we tell stories. The form, the length, the size of the image, will affect whether or not our stories are heard. We all need to begin experimenting and figuring out how to tell a story for the cellphone. One thing I know: It's not the same as telling a story for a full-length DVD or theatrical screening.

With our next film, *Iraq for Sale: The War Profiteers*, we will use all the latest techniques to reach different audiences, to tell the story in film, in viral pieces, for iPods and for cellphones. It's a new-media era, for sure. And those who are quickest, smartest and most creative—not those who have the most money or own the most media outlets—are the ones who are going to get their messages out.

Robert Greenwald, founder of Brave New Films, is a producer, director and political activist.

AMY GOODMAN

If President Bush had stood on the steps of the White House with a megaphone when he set out to sell the Iraq War, he might have convinced a few people about the imminent threat posed by Saddam Hussein. But he had something far more powerful that convinced far more people: He had a compliant press corps ready to amplify his lies. This was the same press corps that investigated and reported for years on President Clinton's lying about an extramarital affair. The difference here was that President Bush's lies take lives.

In order to be able to get that all-important leak from a named or, better yet, unnamed "senior official," reporters trade truth for access. This is the "access of evil," when reporters forgo the tough questions out of fear of being passed over.

And then there is the embedding process. Journalists embedded with US troops in Iraq bring us only one perspective. How about balancing the troops' perspective with reporters embedded in Iraqi hospitals, or in the peace movement around the world? Former Pentagon spokesperson Victoria Clarke proclaimed the embedding process a spectacular success. For the Pentagon, it was. More powerful than any bomb or missile, the Pentagon deployed the media.

During the Persian Gulf War, General Electric owned NBC (it still does). A major nuclear weapons manufacturer—which made parts for many of the weapons in the Gulf War—owned a major television network. Is it any surprise that what we saw on television looked like a military hardware show? According to the *New York Times*, CBS executives "offered advertisers assurances that the war specials could be tailored to provide better lead-ins to commercials. One way would be to insert the commercials after segments that were specially produced with upbeat images or messages about the war."

After the Gulf War, Pentagon spokesperson Pete Williams jumped ship, but he was hardly crossing enemy lines. He became a correspondent for NBC. Just over a decade later, another Pentagon spokesperson, Victoria Clarke, gave up her position to work as a CNN commentator.

During the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, MSNBC, NBC and

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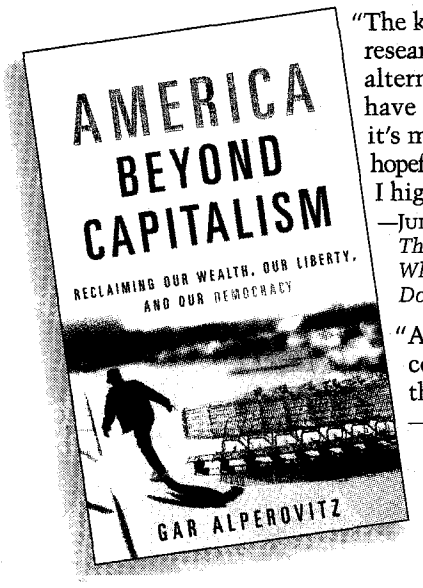

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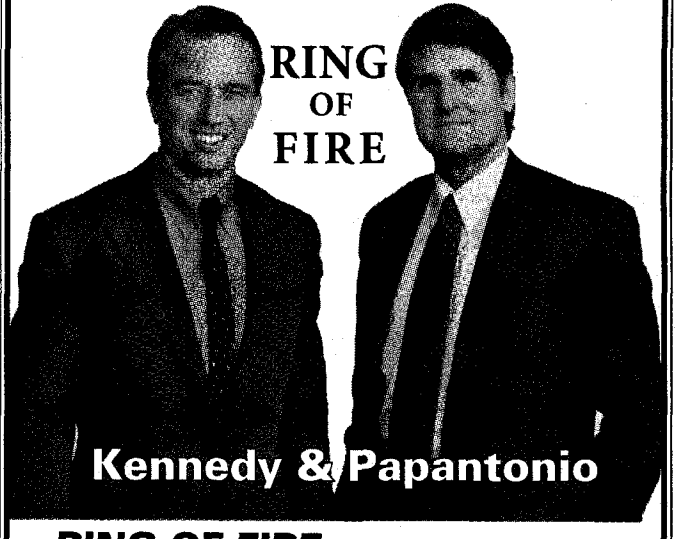

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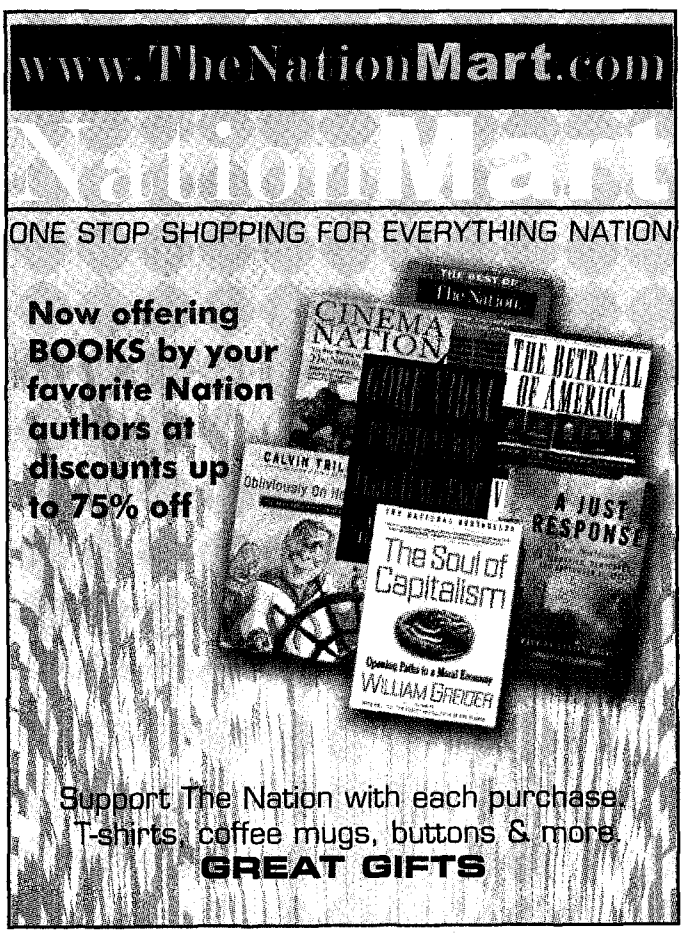
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CNN—not only Fox—called their coverage Operation Iraqi Freedom. We expect the Pentagon to research the most effective propagandistic name to call its operation. But the media's adoption of Pentagon nomenclature raises the question: If this were state media, how would it be any different?

While the big players in the National Entertainment State deserve much of the blame, other major news outlets have truly outdone themselves in their total affront to the role that an independent media should play in a democracy. The *New York Times* and its former national security reporter Judith Miller were critical to the successful promulgation of the WMD lie, with repeated front-page, above-the-fold articles pumping the false stories about aluminum tubes and buried weapons caches, to name a few, all reliant on unnamed sources.

Sinclair Broadcast Group, which controls close to sixty TV stations, acts like a junior version of Fox News, with right-wing biases in its lackluster coverage. Sinclair refused to broadcast an ABC *Nightline* segment on which the names of killed US servicemen and -women were read, continuing the Bush Administration campaign to deny to the American public bad news about the War on Terror. Sinclair also broadcast with much fanfare a Swift Boat Veterans–inspired smear piece against John Kerry at a critical moment in the 2004 presidential race.

And then there's the Clear Channeling of America. Enabled by the Clinton/Gore–backed 1996 Telecommunications Act, the Bush-connected Clear Channel Communications, which began with a dozen radio stations, ballooned into a 1,200-plus-station radio network. According to South Carolina's 2002 Radio Personality of the Year, who believes she was fired for her anti-war beliefs, Clear Channel led prowar rallies, forbade certain songs from being played and silenced critics.

In 1997 the late George Gerbner, former dean of the University of Pennsylvania Annenberg School of Communication, described the media as being "driven not by the creative people who have something to tell, but by global conglomerates that have something to sell." And almost ten years later, it still rings true. We need an independent media. Democracy Now!

Amy Goodman is the host of the public TV/radio news hour Democracy Now! *and co-author of* The Exception to the Rulers: Exposing Oily Politicians, War Profiteers and the Media That Love Them *(Hyperion).*

ROBERT W. McCHESNEY

The National Entertainment Chart demonstrates, again, how enormous the media conglomerates are and how much of our core media are under their control. Although concentration has not increased especially over the past few years, the damage has been done. Democracy is premised on a free press, and freedom of the press is premised on the absence of public or private gatekeepers with monopolistic power. It is why the Supreme Court ruled in 1945 that antitrust was probably more appropriate in the realm of media than in any other area. Looking at this chart, we can see that A.J. Liebling's adage that "freedom of the press is

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limited to those who own one" is frightfully accurate, with all that it says about the state of our core freedoms and our democracy. The Supreme Court was sixty-one years ahead of its time.

This concentrated, conglomerated and profit-driven media system is hardly the result of "free enterprise." These giant companies are the recipients of enormous direct and indirect subsidies and/or government-granted monopoly franchises. They include: monopoly licenses to radio and TV frequencies, cable and satellite TV monopoly franchises, magazine postal subsidies and copyright, to mention a few. For these firms the most important competition may well be in Washington, getting the cushy subsidies and licenses. These policies, worth tens of billions annually, are generally made in our name but without our informed consent. That is the heart of the problem, and it points us to the solution: informed public participation on media policy-making.

Case in point: This summer will see the FCC's review of the ban on cross-ownership, that is, preventing firms from owning both daily newspapers and broadcasting stations in the same community. If the Bush Administration gets its way, the rule will be scrapped, local media monopolization will explode and this chart may someday be regarded as mapping a veritable golden age of competitive media. Company-town media, with one or maybe two conglomerate-owned McNewsrooms serving an entire community, will be the order of the day. In 2003 a massive public outcry prevented the elimination of the cross-ownership rule, and if the public speaks we will stop the Bush Administration again this year. A broad bipartisan coalition has taken shape at www.stopbigmedia.com to organize the fight.

For many, the Internet was going to be a technological solution to the problem of media concentration, blasting open the system and slaying monopoly media power. Despite the Internet's truly revolutionary implications, in itself it cannot address the core crises of our media: the collapse of journalism and the rise of hypercommercialism. As this chart shows, the media giants are using their immense market power to convert the Internet into a psychedelic commercial medium, where these problems will persist.

They also use their considerable political power. The myth of the Internet is that it is a magic technology unaffected by policies. Not true. The genius of the Internet has been a series of policies and subsidies that nurtured it, especially "network neutrality," meaning all users and websites have had equal access to the Internet without discrimination by the Internet service providers. This is now under direct attack by the (government-created) cable and telephone monopolies, which want effectively to privatize control (in their hands) over who is allowed to have a website and who is not. You can learn about the battle to preserve network neutrality, to defend the genius of the Internet, at www.savetheinternet.com, the website of the coalition leading the fight to see that the First Amendment endures in the digital age.

Freedom of the press is something we must continually fight for, or we stand to lose it. If we contest corrupt and secretive policy-making, if we draw citizens into the debate, as we have

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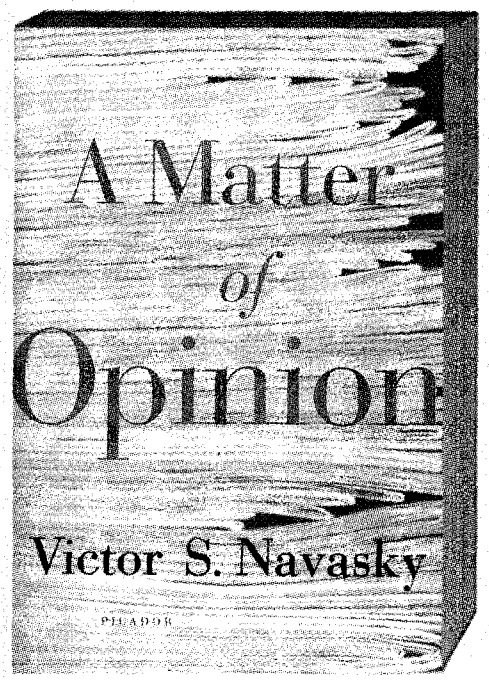

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learned in recent years, we can and will win. It is why the media reform movement is exploding across the nation.

Robert W. McChesney is the author of The Problem of the Media *(Monthly Review) and co-founder of Free Press (www.freepress.net).*

MAKANI THEMBA-NIXON

They call it penetration—as in market penetration. The tentacles of the transnational mediopolies reach deeper into racial and ethnic communities than ever before. For some, this is a triumph in diversity. Big corporations reaching consumers of color is something they say we should celebrate. However, this market penetration has gone hand in hand with decreasing media ownership by people of color, resulting in loss of industry voice and jobs.

Flagship properties that were once trumpeted as success stories in black ownership—BET and *Essence* magazine—have become little more than shadows of their parent companies. The outlets' makeovers were designed to garner greater "synergy" and brand recognition for their corporate masters. As a result, BET looks more and more like VH1, complete with dog-eat-dog "reality" shows, cloying countdown lists and decade retrospectives that work to remake history—even black history—into trivia. In fact, BET was the last place to tune in for Black History Month programming. Its main commemorative offering: a VH1 adaptation hosted by comedian Paul Mooney titled *BET's Top 25 Most @#%! Moments in Black History*. To many, it was fitting, as BET regularly programs what some regard as the most @#%! moments in black popular culture.

The remaking of *Essence* magazine has been more subtle. Celebrity profiles and gossipy features increase in page share, à la *People* magazine (both are Time Warner publications), while the names of *Essence* veterans have been disappearing from the masthead—mostly as a result of "restructuring" under editor and *Teen People* import Angela Burt-Murray.

The loss of *Essence*'s expert leadership is but one example of how diversity in staffing (especially at the top) is closely tied to diversity in ownership. According to a 2002 study by the Minority Media and Telecommunications Council, only 4.2 percent of radio outlets are minority-owned, yet these outlets employ more than half of all the people of color in radio. Fewer minority-owned outlets has meant fewer minorities in media. And changes in regulation, like the elimination of tax incentives for outlet sales to minorities, are making things worse.

Television-staffing diversity has also been taking a real blow, especially since the merger of UPN with WB. According to a forthcoming study commissioned by the Writers Guild of America west, before the merger UPN had the single highest concentration of writers of color—63 percent of television writers of color in 2005–06 were employed by UPN. This was part of a conscious marketing strategy aimed at cornering the young black market to carve out a bankable niche. Some of the most controversial black programming on the air, including a short-lived, much-protested sitcom on slavery, was on CBS-owned UPN. But UPN is merging with WB to create a new network called CW. CW's fall scheduling plans show a safe mix of both networks' main stalwarts, which bodes deep cuts in UPN's black programming: Only a few appear to have survived, including *Girlfriends* and *Everybody Hates Chris*.

From Fox Sports en Español to the growing proliferation of affinity groups of color on MySpace (News Corporation's mega "e-community"), there are few spaces that Big Media hasn't invaded. And if that's not enough to keep you up at night, consider this: If public discourse in our communities becomes completely corporatized, what will become of our voices, our points of view, our interests? As history has shown, communities without access to media in their interest are vulnerable indeed.

Makani Themba-Nixon is executive director of the Praxis Project, a media and policy advocacy center based in Washington, DC.

REBECCA MacKINNON

Most of the media properties listed on this chart are what could be called "one-way media": Professionals produce a media product that is broadcast on TV, published in print or posted on the web, and an audience consumes it. Done. End of story.

Three companies *not* on this chart are revolutionizing the way millions of Americans inform and entertain themselves and one another: Google, Yahoo! and Microsoft. These companies—none of which set out to be media companies—are now innovators in new forms of participatory media, born of the read-write web. Microsoft runs the world's biggest blogging platform, MSN Spaces. Google transformed the way most of us get our information with a search engine that enables us to find citizen-created media content alongside the work of professionals. It now also owns several services, like Blogger.com, that enable anybody with minimal technical knowledge or equipment to create and disseminate media. Yahoo!, which started out as a search engine, is now a full-blown media company enabling users to customize their own mix-and-match diet of news, information, opinion and entertainment produced by a range of professional sources as well as their friends, colleagues and amateur strangers. Yahoo! also provides easy-to-use services enabling people to publish, share and disseminate their own media creations with relative ease and little cost.

In this dawning era of blogging, MySpace (the online community site wildly popular with teenagers, now owned by News Corporation) and YouTube (a year-old video-sharing startup likely to be bought up soon by one of the big players), the latest Pew study has found that 48 million American adults—35 percent of all adult Internet users—have created original content and posted it on the web. And that doesn't count all the kids on MySpace. Internet entrepreneur Robert Young recently wrote that over the past year we have witnessed the birth of a new media sector: the self-expression sector, taking its place alongside TV, radio, magazines, newspapers and the largely one-way websites run by many of the companies on this chart that allow very limited, if any, user participation.

It now looks pretty certain that, before long, Google, Yahoo!

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Dr. Kenneth Bartlett is a welcome and valuable addition to the Teaching Company's history faculty. A past President of the Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies, and a 2005 winner of a prestigious national 3M Teaching Fellowship, he has devoted much of his career to bringing Renaissance culture into undergraduate and graduate classrooms.

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The Creation of Man, detail showing God Almighty, by Michelangelo, 1508-12, The Sistine Chapel, Rome.

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and Microsoft will have displaced some of the companies on the chart and acquired or merged with others. None of the one-way media companies are driving innovation in self-expression media, though some have gotten into the game thanks to purchases of or partnerships with other innovators (and a bit of cautious copycatting). News Corporation, with MySpace, has gone furthest in its embrace of the web's full read-write potential. For some reason Time Warner's AOL has done little to innovate in this arena—but will its new partnership with Google change that? Or maybe Google should just buy Time Warner?

As the self-expression sector grows into a multimillion-dollar industry, those of us who care about media's role in democracy need to start thinking about what this means. Certainly, the read-write web empowers people who didn't have the resources to get their own voices heard in the past, and has the potential to empower many more. But who participates in self-expression media? Who has ready access to cheap broadband connections and computers and who doesn't? Will the rise of the self-expression media sector mean that people with easy broadband access at home and work will gain in their influence over the American political discourse, while the vast unwired will find it even harder to get their perspectives heard? Will universal access to high-speed Internet—along with widespread web education—become prerequisites for an inclusive democratic discourse in this country?

THE WEB EMPOWERS PEOPLE WHO LACKED THE RESOURCES TO GET THEIR VOICES HEARD IN THE PAST. BUT WHO PARTICIPATES IN THE SELF-EXPRESSION MEDIA?

Rebecca MacKinnon is co-founder of GlobalVoicesOnline, a global citizens' media community, and a research fellow at Harvard Law School's Berkman Center for Internet and Society. She is a former CNN correspondent and bureau chief in Beijing and Tokyo.

PAUL D. MILLER, A K A DJ SPOOKY

I'm an artist, writer and musician whose work focuses on creating culture out of situations and scenarios; for me, music isn't music—it's information. I look at it as a raw resource: How does the music translate into a collage-based composition? As such, I need access to lots and lots of files. Much of the "material" I use comes from the public domain, and a lot of it comes from the private—it's a creative strategy based on sampling from archives and record collections.

These are strange times for the culture industry. There's tremendous potential to forge new art out of today's globalized digital environment. But we also have identity theft and credit-card fraud at huge levels. We have the software industry acting as an extension of various nation-states' local concerns (China and Saudi Arabia, for example). We have a music industry that is actively sabotaging the way people can interact with music software and shareware files. We have CDs that install rootkit spyware monitors into Windows media software. We have an ability, through the use of search algorithms and collaborative filters, to monitor consumer taste patterns at a level never seen before in human history. And last but not least, we have children growing up in a world where the Internet has completely altered the way they think about local and global music trends.

Much of the economy of the industrialized world is based on brand-name relationships—so one of the key questions of the digital age is, what happens when these relationships are imported into the virtual world of the Internet? While the music industry lives in fear of downloadable media, I want to see artists let people know that another world is possible, and digital media are part of the tool kit for re-engineering the collective psyche of a country bombarded with *American Idol*, reality TV and a debased and totally uninspiring media landscape. Look up, and ask yourself: Can you see the frequencies holding it all together? Would you be able to upload those ideals and share them? That's something we need to ask ourselves these days: Who speaks through you?

Paul D. Miller, a k a *DJ Spooky (www.djspooky.com), is a writer, artist and musician who lives and works in New York City. His first book is* Rhythm Science *(MIT), and his work has been exhibited at museums throughout the world. He has performed in a wide variety of contexts, including at the Tate Modern, the Guggenheim Museum and the Herod Atticus Theater at the Acropolis, in Athens, Greece.*

ETHAN MICHAELI

Media consolidation has exacerbated the information gap across race and class lines. For some, it has produced an immense bounty. Those who can afford it can purchase access to a wide range of news sources tailored to their political tastes, from cable television networks to Internet sites to periodicals. Independent media sources that appeal to left-leaning, middle-class consumers have been carried along by their readers' swelling bank accounts. Likewise for the corporate-owned news sources like *The New Yorker* that target "independent" market niches.

But media consolidation has doomed the community news sources most consumed by low-income audiences. Local newspapers, radio and TV are left behind as middle-class readers choose other media and advertisers follow. Shrinking ad sales over recent decades have prompted many local news organizations and ethnic media to shut their statehouse bureaus, and many others to close their doors altogether. Media consolidation is just one way that globalization bites local and community-based media, though. Giant chains like Wal-Mart are less likely to place ads in community media than were their locally owned predecessors.

National media are increasingly catering to the highly mobile, globalized, mostly white middle class. A quick glance at the table of contents of news sources that reach middle-class readers will

(Continued on Page 29)

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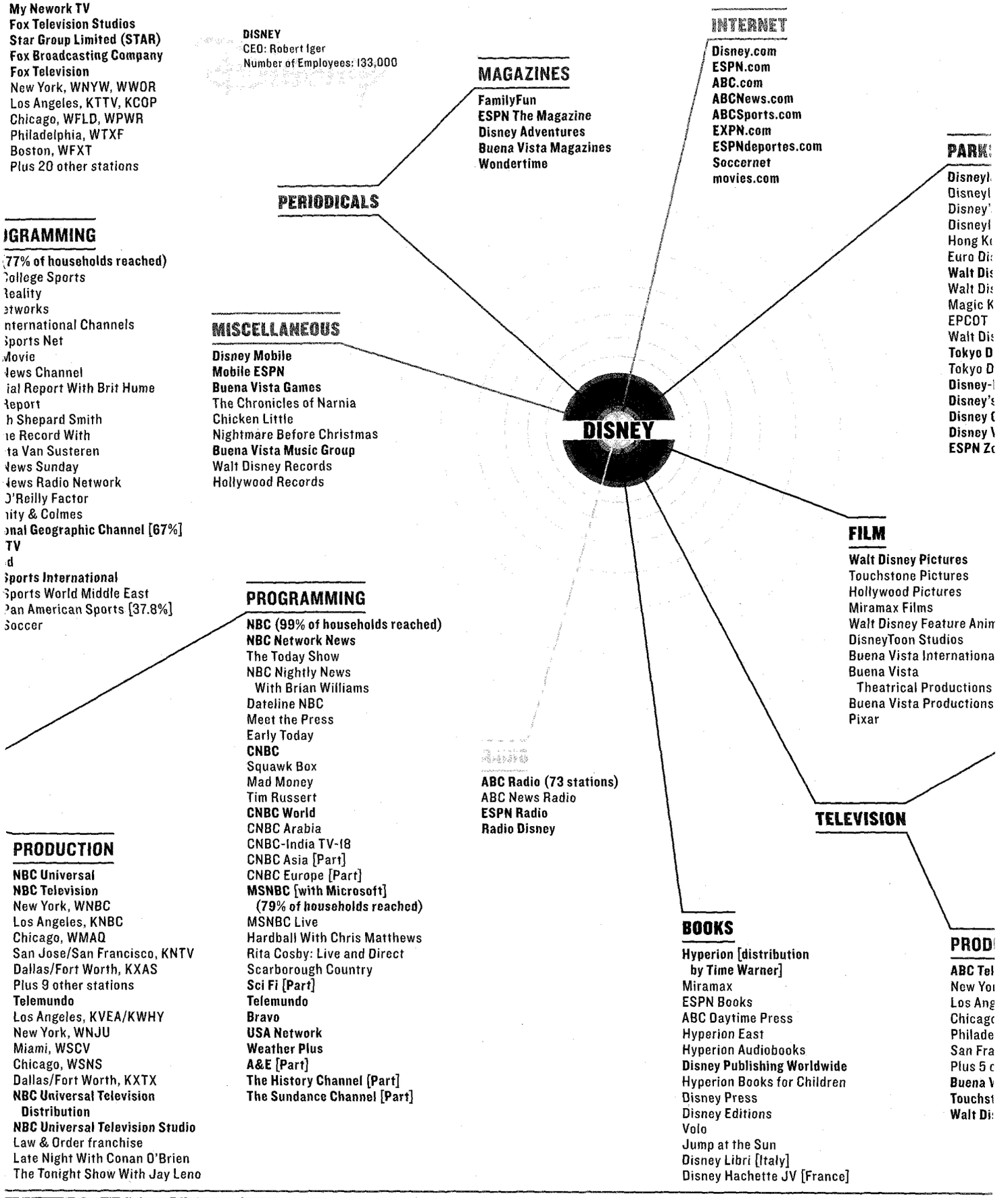
THE NATIONAL ENT



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A TEN-POINT PLAN FOR MEDIA DEMOCRACY

Ten years after the passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, digital technologies are rapidly reshaping the country's communications system. It will be the most powerful media environment ever created—always "on" with connections via PCs, digital TVs and an array of mobile devices, delivering a torrent of personalized, interactive and virtual content, much of it coming from the nation's most powerful traditional and new media companies (e.g., AT&T, Comcast, Google, Microsoft). The next several years are critical to insure that the promise of what we now experience online—and its vast potential to help build a just civil society—is fulfilled. With Congress poised to pass legislation that rewrites key parts of the Telecom Act, the following ten action items should be on any media reform agenda.

1. Media Ownership

The GOP-controlled FCC wants to eliminate key media ownership restrictions affecting TV and radio stations, cable systems and newspapers. Expect fewer owners of our most powerful outlets and a further decrease in journalism budgets.

Action: Join the new "Stopbigmedia" coalition (www.stopbigmedia.com) to promote diversity of media ownership and content. Also, work against the renomination of FCC chair Kevin Martin.

2. Mergers

Sprawling new media powerhouses are emerging, in which offline and digital content and distribution, advertising and marketing are tied to the same multinational giants. For example, the pending AT&T and BellSouth merger will create a colossus spanning voice, broadband and video.

Action: Join with Media Access Project (www.mediaaccess.org) to fight the AT&T/BellSouth merger. Push for new laws to restore our trust in antitrust.

3. Network Neutrality

We can't permit the Internet to come under the control of phone and cable companies, like Comcast and AT&T, that want to transform it into a toll road, with fast lanes for corporate media and a digital dirt road for everyone else.

Action: Join the "strange bedfellows" coalition, which includes MoveOn.org, the American Library Association and the Christian Coalition, pressing Congress to pass "network neutrality" rules to protect the principles of nondiscrimination and open access. Join Save the Internet (www.savetheinternet.com).

4. Spectrum Management

The wireless Internet (Wi-Fi) has been an unprecedented success, with more than 35,000 hot spots (many of them free) operating in the United States. But for the wireless broadband revolution to continue, it needs new unlicensed spectrum. Big communications companies, including broadcasters, want to keep for themselves what should be the public's airwaves.

Action: Urge the FCC to set aside additional spectrum for unlicensed use and support legislation currently in Congress that will make unused TV spectrum available for Wi-Fi applications. The New America Foundation (www.newamerica.net) has been leading the charge for enlightened spectrum management.

5. Community Broadband

Municipal wireless systems represent the most promising alternative to the two-fisted stranglehold that cable and telephone companies currently have over the broadband Internet. Fourteen states, acting at the behest of the cable and telco lobbies, have passed laws limiting these efforts, and others are considering such restrictions.

Action: Urge your Representatives to support federal legislation (e.g., the municipal broadband provision in the otherwise objectionable Communications Opportunity, Promotion and Enhancement [COPE] Act) that will restore the right of cities to undertake their own broadband projects. See Free Press's Community Internet page (www.freepress.net/communityinternet/=US).

6. Privacy

As the recent furor over NSA access to millions of private telephone records makes clear, we need to update privacy protections for the digital age. Such protections should extend into the commercial arena too, where new data-collection and -mining technologies, coupled with personalized marketing campaigns, represent a new threat to our personal privacy.

Action: Call for a thorough overhaul of existing privacy regulations, beginning with a requirement for "affirmative consent" before personal data can be collected, and covering the latest developments in digital data collection and analysis. See the EPIC website (www.epic.org).

7. Intellectual Property

Just as privacy protection must move from the analog to the digital domain, so must copyright law reflect the reality of networked computers and other personal devices. Congress's initial effort in this regard, the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, went way overboard in its desire to protect content owners (namely, the entertainment industry), and the principle of "fair use" suffered accordingly.

Action: Urge your Representative to reject the Bush-backed Intellectual Property Protection Act (which compounds the DMCA's excesses) in favor of legislation that preserves fair use. See www.publicknowledge.org.

8. Universal Digital Service

Millions of Americans still lack basic Internet, let alone broadband. We need new approaches to achieving "universal service," the policy that sought to make telephone service affordable for low-income and rural Americans.

Action: Call for Congress to expand the Universal Service Fund in the digital era, and support efforts to bridge the digital divide through municipal Wi-Fi and community networking projects.

9. Diverse Broadband Content

The phone industry is building a new system that will deliver interactive TV programming and broadband content (e.g., Verizon's FiOS and AT&T's Project Lightspeed). Cable is also expanding its network offerings. Progressive media must make sure their content is on these networks. We must also build and expand new media services, including digital TV programming channels, broadband websites and mobile networks.

Action: Urge phone and cable companies to open their system to progressive, alternative and diversely owned content. Funders must support an independent digital infrastructure.

10. Minority Ownership

African-Americans, Hispanics and others have fared poorly in the media business, owning only a handful of radio and TV stations. Most of the cable outlets aimed at minorities are owned by corporate giants (e.g., Viacom now owns BET and Comcast controls the new TV One service for African-Americans).

Action: Civil rights groups need to take a more adversarial approach to the media monopoly—seeking minority ownership of local and national broadband outlets.

JEFFREY CHESTER

Jeffrey Chester is executive director of the Center for Digital Democracy (www.democraticmedia.org). His book Digital Destiny *will be published by New Press in January.*

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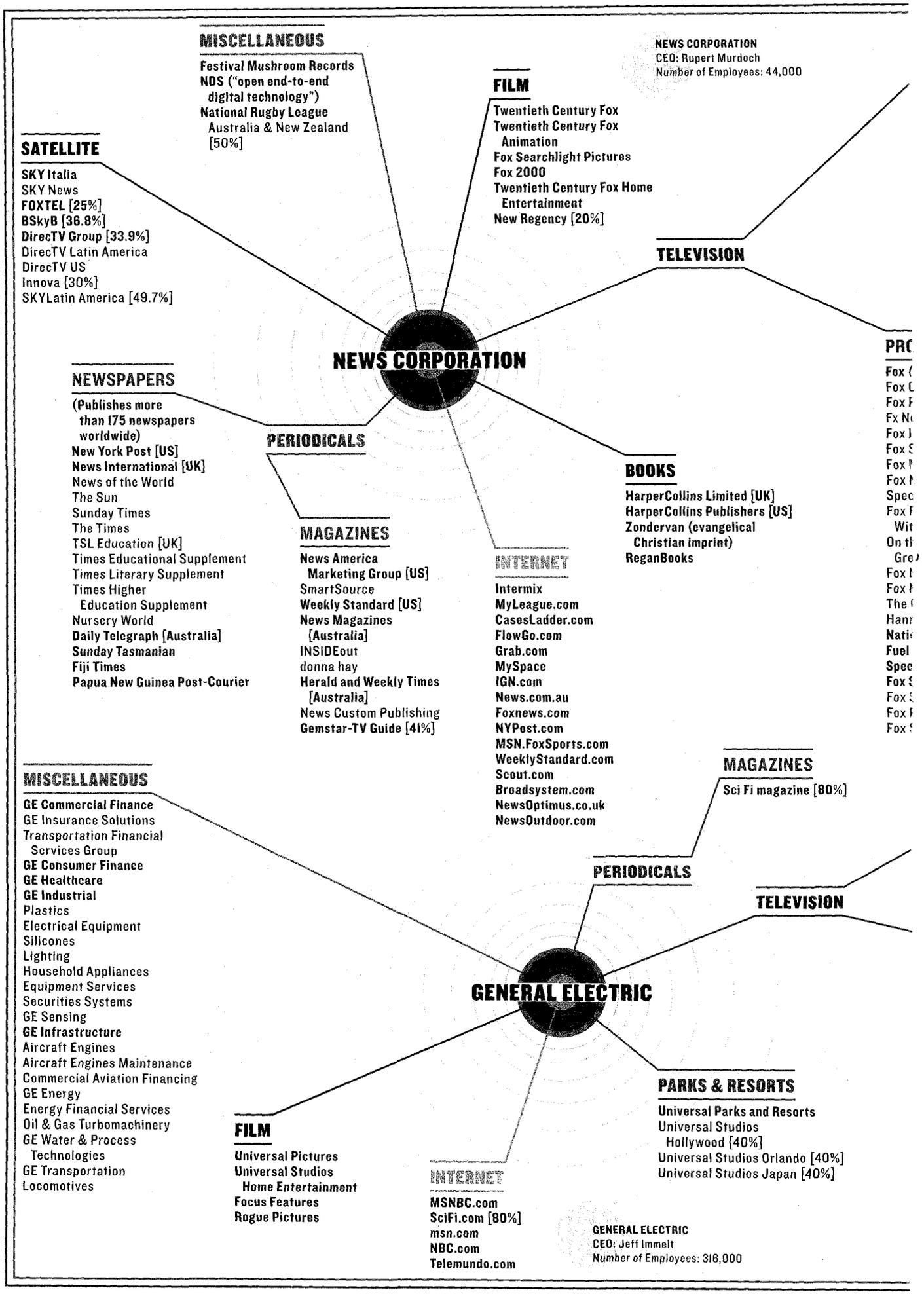

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LAKSHMI CHAUDHRY

Teddy Roosevelt said, "Of all forms of tyranny the least attractive and most vulgar is the tyranny of mere wealth." And so it is that we find ourselves living in the most vulgar of times, presided over by the Rough Rider's number-one fan, George Bush. But the President is himself the creation of a cultural zeitgeist aptly described as "Bush World" by critic John Powers. Who better suited than Dubya to be President in an era when raiding pension plans, kissing up to The Donald and unabashed lying—be it to invade Iraq or sell one's memoir—is business as usual? It's no accident that the rise of this winner-take-all culture coincides with an era of unprecedented media consolidation. The media giants—in the guise of giving us what we "want"—have helped create a broader culture defined by untrammeled greed, the worship of power and a ruthless disregard for the public good. For a nation of spectators, the corruption scandals in Congress are no more surprising than rumors of vote-rigging on our favorite TV show, *American Idol*.

The really bad news is that this is not just America's problem. After all, the *Idol* franchise earns more than $2 billion worldwide. Be they Slovaks, Turks, Malaysians or French, everyone has learned to cheer for the winners and revel in the humiliation of those who lose. And in India, which in the past fifteen years has witnessed an explosive growth of corporate media—broadcast, print and online—the result has been infotainment on steroids. Whereas in the "bad" old socialist days dull stories about "issues"—say, poverty, religious violence or women's rights—ruled the headlines, the brave new "liberalized" Indian media offer wall-to-wall, celebrity-obsessed content that would make Geraldo proud—though it seems a tad more obscene in a country where more than 30 percent of the population lives in poverty. But that hasn't fazed Bertelsmann, Vivendi Universal and Time Warner, which are lining up to be part of this "revolution."

The influence of the media conglomerates listed on this chart extends far beyond what they actually own. Indian media outlets are controlled by local conglomerates, but they behave like Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, both in how they operate and what they produce. It's no different with companies like Sweden's Bonnier, Italy's MediaSet or Brazil's Globo. We all live in Bush World now.

Lakshmi Chaudhry is a senior editor at In These Times.

ERIC KLINENBERG

Since 1996 an unprecedented spate of media megamergers has made it difficult for anyone to know which conglomerate owns what outlet, even in our own cities and towns. Meanwhile, aspiring media giants that don't appear on the map—corporations such as Clear Channel Communications (which owns around 1,200 radio stations and provides programming for 5,000 others), Tribune Company (the only corporation to own a newspaper and broadcast television station in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago) and Sinclair Broadcast Group (which owns, operates, programs or provides sales services to fifty-eight television stations in thirty-six markets)—have aggressively lobbied Congress and worked the courts to eliminate the few remaining ownership caps. If *The Nation* runs a twentieth-anniversary consolidation chart in 2016, they want to be on it.

Unfortunately, most Americans no longer need a map to know that consolidation has degraded the media ecosystem on which the nation's democratic and cultural life depends. During the past decade, as chains and conglomerates took over locally owned and -operated newspapers, radio stations and television stations everywhere, Americans experienced the downside of concentration firsthand. The local reporters, veteran TV anchors, producers and live DJs who once provided the stories, sights and sounds that made our hometowns feel like home have become endangered species in the age of Big Media, replaced by the same wire copy, digitally voice-tracked radio programs, video news releases and other canned content that runs in every market, coast to coast.

No one, except the owners of conglomerates, benefits from concentrated control of local media, and in the past decade public outrage over the costs of consolidation has helped turn the embryonic media reform movement into the nation's fastest-growing bipartisan political project, uniting progressives from MoveOn.org and Common Cause with conservatives from the Christian Coalition and the National Rifle Association, and everyone in between. When former FCC chairman Michael Powell tried to gut the nation's already feeble media ownership restrictions in 2003, he set off a torrent of popular dissent so strong that some 3 million letters of complaint, written by members of an expansive bipartisan coalition, poured into the capital over the next two years, while citizens packed town halls in big cities and small towns to protest.

This summer it's prime time for the media reform movement once again. On May 26 the Senate confirmed Robert McDowell's appointment as the third Republican commissioner on the five-member FCC. Like the current chairman, Kevin Martin, McDowell is a former Bush campaign worker, and he pledges to eliminate the "cumbersome underbrush of unnecessary government regulation." Analysts expect that chairman Martin will soon initiate a new process to further relax media ownership rules. Since Americans overwhelmingly oppose more media deregulation, Martin's success depends on whether he can work with Congress to change the laws quickly and quietly, without stirring up much public debate. If Big Media has its way, the policy decision that will help shape the future of democracy in America will be made without any democracy at all.

Eric Klinenberg is associate professor of sociology at New York University. Fighting for Air, *his forthcoming book about how Big Media broke the public's trust and unleashed a movement for reform, will be published by Henry Holt in 2007.*

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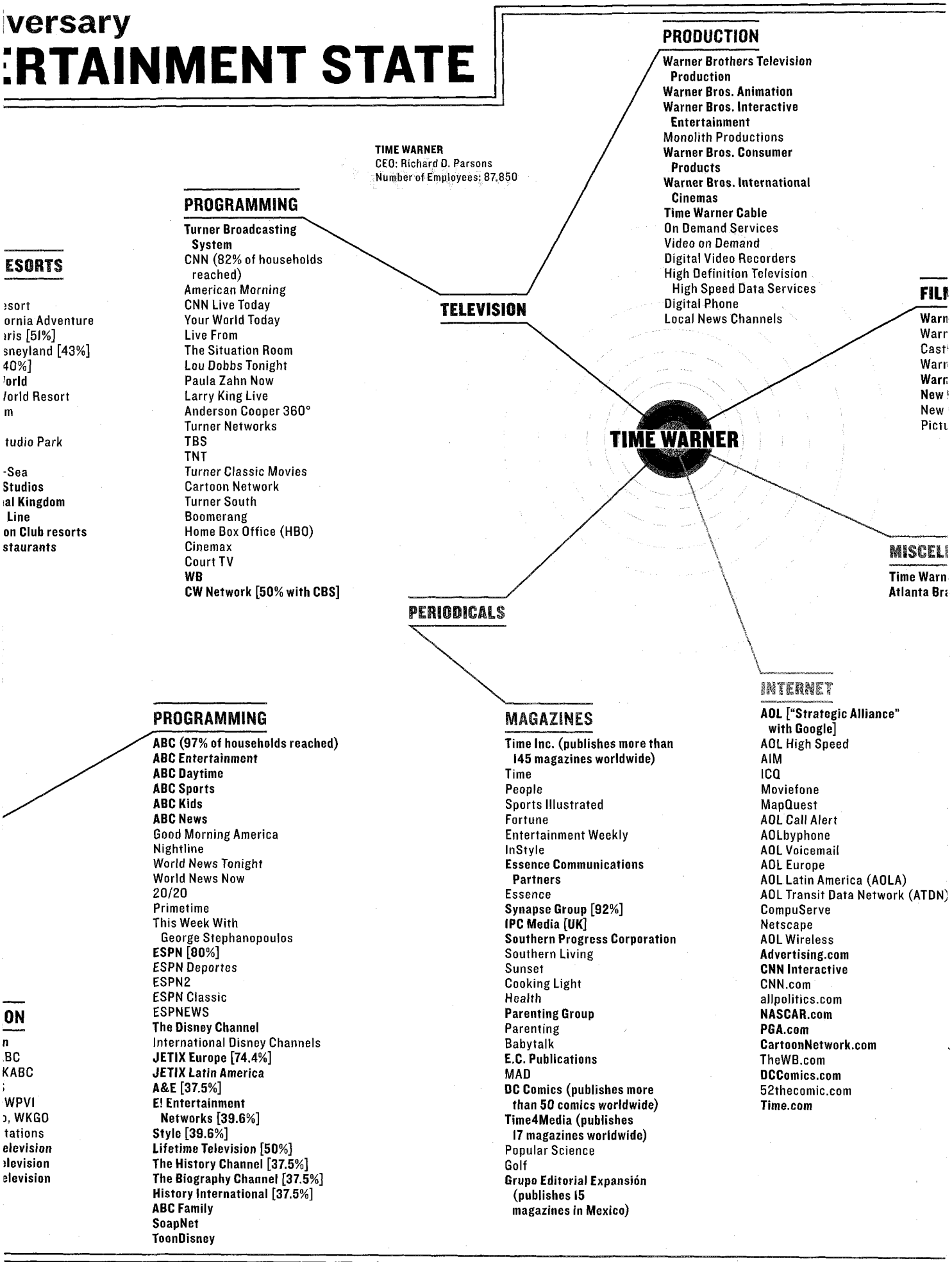

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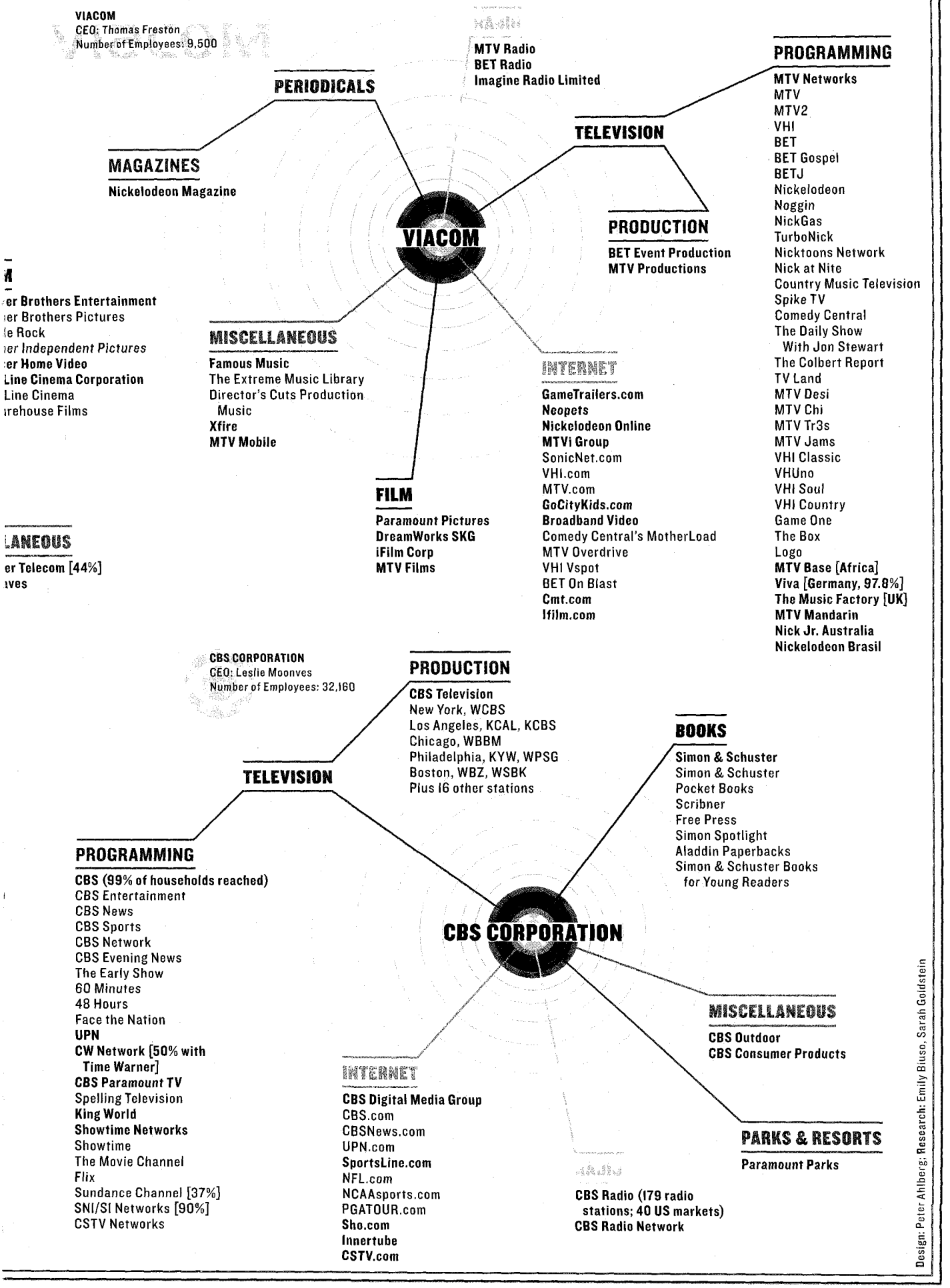

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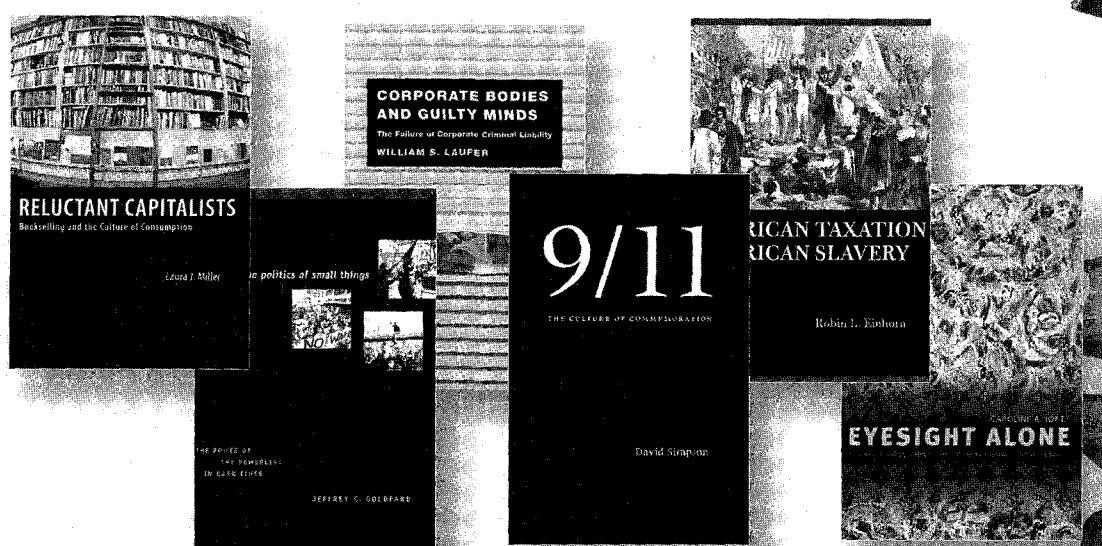

Reluctant Capitalists

Bookselling and the Culture of Consumption
Laura J. Miller

"Chain superstores, notes Laura J. Miller's fascinating new study *Reluctant Capitalists: Bookselling and the Culture of Consumption*, are the latest manifestation of a centuries-old struggle between bookselling Davids and Goliaths—a battle over where Americans actually shop versus stores with, Miller tartly notes, 'a style of retailing that Americans at least profess to miss.'"
—Paul Collins, *Voice Literary Supplement*

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The Power of the Powerless in Dark Times
Jeffrey C. Goldfarb

"For many people in America and elsewhere around the world, these appear to be gloomy days indeed. Whether it's the unease of life under corporate globalism, the ever-lurking fear of terrorist attack, or dread of the repressive impulses of all manners of fundamentalism, there doesn't seem to be much the average person can do to effect change in the larger scheme of things. Jeffrey C. Goldfarb offers a way out of the seeming abyss with his new book *The Politics of Small Things: The Power of the Powerless in Dark Times*. . . . [It] is a modest book. . . . But it's long enough to make the case that the phrase 'reach out and touch someone' is more than some derelict advertising slogan."
—Vincent Carducci, *PopMatters*

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Corporate Bodies and Guilty Minds

The Failure of Corporate Criminal Liability
William S. Laufer

"Given that we seem to be at the bottom of the business ethics cycle, and that multinational corporations currently have more power to control our lives than many governments do, Laufer's book is a great and timely review of what reforms have worked in the past, and which ones have failed. This is a plan for taking back America for ordinary Americans using legal change and political reform."—Howard Dean

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David Simpson

"In our public culture of obsessive commemoration, 9/11 has become a site of bad faith in both remembering and forgetting. Simpson's critical ethos makes us recognize what Adorno once called the morality of not being home in one's home. A persuasive reflection on the aftermath of 9/11 and a challenge to our public discourse."—Andreas Huyssen, Columbia University

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(Continued From Page 20)
find that foreign policy items like the war in Iraq take priority over domestic conflicts like the war on drugs. Middle-class media focus on the prices of for-sale housing, not the shortage of affordable rental housing, which is increasing homelessness. Local news is totally ignored. No national media repeated the *Times-Picayune*'s warnings about New Orleans's levees, or covered coal miners before the West Virginia disaster, or had undocumented workers on their front pages before the recent marches.

The trend is toward a two-tiered media market. News sources that serve middle-class liberals mainly provide access by paid subscription. Even mainstream media increasingly refer their audiences to their websites and cable networks. Christian networks that mix proselytizing with conservative politics, meanwhile, reach their audience over free TV, toll-free telephone lines and free subscriptions to their magazines.

Today's media universe allows those who can't afford access to slip into a separate and unequal world of second-class information. The poor are watching their media options shrink—both in terms of the number of local sources available to them and in the narrowing content of those national sources that still try to reach them. Calls for media democracy should demand socioeconomic diversity in staff, content and audience among the major sources, as well as a diverse array of news sources at the local level. Access must be guaranteed through universal Internet connectivity and taxpayer subsidies for community-based media through grassroots versions of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. We must amplify the voices of the voiceless, both as subjects and as authors.

Ethan Michaeli is the founder and publisher of Residents' Journal, *a national-award-winning magazine written entirely by Chicago public housing tenants and residents of other low-income communities.*

ANA MARIE COX

In the mid 1990s the favorite sport among my hipster friends was catching out corporations and products that dared to masquerade as "indie." What at first glance might appear to be a simple economic truth—is the entity in question owned by a major corporation or not?—often became a debate about aesthetics and loyalty. I remember long arguments parsing the ready-made thrift-store chic of Urban Outfitters, the cloying bubble-gum pop of Veruca Salt (started at Minty Fresh, moved to Geffen) and the off-the-rack irony exhibited in *Reality Bites*—our authenticity jealously guarded. Or it was, until the corporations stopped caring about it. I'm sure that somewhere in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, there's a 22-year-old Wesleyan graduate thundering away on his blog against the evil that major record labels do—I hope to buy him a microbrew someday.

What strikes me about the listings compiled here are the brands I've never heard of, the ones so marginal—yet not indie!—that they couldn't even sustain the kinds of debate my friends and I used to have: News Corporation owns the magazine *Nursery World*, and Time Warner has a stake in a Superman offshoot at 52thecomic.com. Disney has an African-American-targeted imprint called Jump at the Sun books. General Electric, parent of CNBC, apparently used to produce a talk show starring John McEnroe. Yeah, me neither. Ten years ago my friends and I worried that corporations were trying to disguise themselves. Now they've just become invisible to the naked eye, their long fingers exploring places that you didn't even know existed.

Ana Marie Cox is the author of the novel Dog Days *(Riverhead) and a contributor to* Time *and Time.com. She is aware of the irony.*

MARK CRISPIN MILLER

Ten years ago, when we first focused national attention on the dangers of the US media cartel, the situation was already grim, although in retrospect it may seem better than it really was. In the spring of 1996 Fox News was only a conspiracy (which broke a few months later). CNN belonged to Turner Broadcasting, which hadn't yet been gobbled by Time Warner (although it would be just a few months later); Viacom had not yet bought CBS News (although it would in 1999, before they later parted ways); and, as the Telecommunications Act had been passed only months earlier, local radio had not yet largely disappeared from the United States (although it was obviously vanishing). One could still somewhat plausibly assert, as many did, that warnings of a major civic crisis were unfounded, overblown or premature, as there was little evidence of widespread corporate censorship, and so we were a long way from the sort of journalistic meltdown that *The Nation* had predicted.

Thus was the growing threat of media concentration treated much like global warming, which, back then, was also slighted as a "controversial" issue ("the experts" being allegedly at odds about it), and one whose consequences, at their worst, were surely centuries away—a catastrophic blunder, as the past decade has made entirely clear to every sane American. Now, as the oceans rise and simmer and the polar bears go under, only theocratic nuts keep quibbling with the inconvenient truth of global warming. And now, likewise, few journalists are quite so willing to defend the Fourth Estate, which under Bush & Co. has fallen to new depths. Although its history is far from glorious, the US press has never been as bad as it is now; and so we rarely hear, from any serious reporters, those blithe claims that all is well (or no worse than it ever was).

Contrary to the counterclaims in 1996, there was, as *The Nation* noted then, copious hard evidence of corporate meddling with the news, and also, even more important, lots of subtler evidence of reportorial self-censorship throughout the media cartel. And yet what stood out as egregious back then seems pretty tame today, now that the press consistently tunes out or plays down the biggest news, while hyping trivialities, or, if it covers a disaster, does so only fleetingly and without "pointing fingers." (New Orleans is now forgotten.) The press that went hoarse over Monica Lewinsky's dress is largely silent on the Bush regime's subversion of the Constitution; its open

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violation of the laws here and abroad; its global use of torture; its vast surveillance program(s); its covert propaganda foreign and domestic; its flagrant cronyism; its suicidal military, economic and environmental policies; and its careful placement of the federal establishment into the hands of Christianist extremists. Whether it's such tawdry fare as Jeffrey Gannon's many overnights at Bush's house, or graver matters like the Patriot Act, or the persistent questions about 9/11, or the President's imperial "signing statements" or—most staggering of all—the ever-growing evidence of coast-to-coast election fraud by Bush & Co., the press has failed in its constitutional obligation to keep us well informed about the doings of our government.

In short, our very lives and liberty are at unprecedented risk because our press has long since disappeared into "the media"—a mammoth antidemocratic oligopoly that is far more responsive to its owners, big shareholders and good buddies in the government than it is to the rest of us, the people of this country.

Surely other factors too have helped wipe out the news: an institutional overreliance on official sources; the reportorial star system, with its corruptive salaries and honoraria, and all those opportunities to hobnob with important criminals; the propaganda drive against "the liberal media"; the stupefying influence of TV, which has dragged much of the print world into its too-speedy orbit; etc. The fundamental reason for the disappearance of the news, however, is the media cartel itself. Fixated on the bottom line, it cuts the costs of real reporting while overplaying cheap crapola; and in its endless drive for more, it is an ally of the very junta whose high crimes and misdemeanors it should be exposing to the rest of us. It is past time, therefore, to go beyond the charting and analysis of media ownership, to boycotts, strikes and protests of the media cartel itself.

Mark Crispin Miller is a professor of culture and communications at New York University. His latest book is Fooled Again: How the Right Stole the 2004 Election & Why They'll Steal the Next One Too (Unless We Stop Them) *(Basic).*

MARKOS MOULITSAS ZÚNIGA

The media landscape is changing dramatically, seemingly on a daily basis, and what we once considered serious dangers to our democracy—things like media consolidation and the absence of balance and fairness—will become increasingly less important. We are at the beginning of the age of citizen media, where corporations can own vast, billion-dollar media outlets yet fail to control the flow and content of information. It's quite hard to be a media gatekeeper when everyone becomes media, and that's what we're seeing happen in the age of blogs, wikis, social networking sites, podcasting, vlogging, message boards, e-mail groups and whatever wonderful communication technologies emerge tomorrow.

Consolidation isn't saving newspaper circulation numbers. And television is likewise confronted by two looming trends. First, great video can be produced on gear costing less than $1,000, and technology (such as Apple's iMovie) has dramatically simplified once-technologically-complex tasks so that the most casual hobbyist can create great content. Second, the convergence of the Internet and television is imminent.

This means that by the end of the decade there will be little distinction between traditional television content and that distributed via the Internet. Televisions will be web-enabled, able to pull content from the Internet. Much as blogging has allowed writers to bypass traditional publications, video producers will be able to ignore the corporate broadcasters and deliver their content directly to the masses. The wildly popular upstart YouTube is already doing this on the web. The jump from computer screen to television screen is closer than most of us realize. The fight over media consolidation is becoming increasingly anachronistic. We need to focus on making sure progressives learn to use the tools of this new media landscape. That's where the new-century media wars will be fought and won. Not in a corporate boardroom.

Markos Moulitsas Zúniga is the founder of Daily Kos and co-author of Crashing the Gate: Netroots, Grassroots, and the Rise of People-Powered Politics *(Chelsea Green).*

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

for all women, but I can speak for myself. There are more female Dylan fans out there than Goldstein acknowledges. He could find them by hanging around the Dylan online message boards and newsgroups. And by going to concerts. He'd discover that current set lists don't include only 1960s classics but are heavily laced with songs from his latest albums.

He'd also find songs subversive of the patriarchy and machismo he's so sure permeate Dylan's work. For example, in "Summer Days": "I got my hammer ringin', but the nails ain't goin' down." Or in "High Water," where the protagonist looks to a woman to save him (as many Dylan protagonists have) from the deluge: "Don't reach out for me," she said. "Can't you see I'm drownin' too?" Women, he acknowledges, are in the same leaky boat as men. Or in the monumental "Highlands," where the narrator wanders, lost and indecisive, a self-mocking figure. None of these make a convincing picture of a machismo patriarch. As for writing songs about corrupt love, please. That's been one of the staples of love poetry since the genre was invented.

But people often pull "Sweetheart Like You" out of the hat with a triumphal flourish as proof of Dylan's misogyny. I think it's a minor masterpiece, and probably his most misunderstood one. It's not a love song at all. Like most of the *Infidels* album, this song struggles with the question of the apparent absence of God in a world given over to evil. Dylan the writer is not the narrator, who is indeed an amoral and sexist character, a liar, cheat and a thief. Dylan the writer plays with the hackneyed pickup line ("What's a sweetheart like you doing in a dump like this?") to launch an exploration of what happens to a good person in a world where virtue is not rewarded. This song has nothing to do with love, but I suspect the lines about women staying home have sent up so many red flags that most people don't really hear that. Judy Collins has a nice cover of the song, if you want to hear a woman who seems to think this shit is worth the listen.

LEEANN HANSEN

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

We Are the World

DAVID RIEFF

A NEW DEAL FOR THE WORLD: America's Vision for Human Rights.
By Elizabeth Borgwardt.
Harvard. 437 pp. $35.

THE CASE FOR GOLIATH: How America Acts as the World's Government in the 21st Century.
By Michael Mandelbaum.
PublicAffairs. 283 pp. $26.

One of the few fond memories I have of the Kosovo War is of the enthusiastic greeting I received from the sergeant in charge after I arrived at a tiny Macedonian post on the Albanian border. "Welcome to Macedonia," he said, grasping my hand and pumping it. "Macedonia is best country." Then, after a pause, he added, "And I do not say that only because I am Macedonian."

At the time, it seemed easy both to enjoy and also to condescend to such self-regarding nonsense, and to view it as little more than the primitive expression of national feeling in a citizen of a small, weak, new nation whose very future was still open to doubt. Certainly, this wasn't the way we citizens of "grown-up" countries thought about ourselves. However, after reading *The Case for Goliath*, Michael Mandelbaum's astonishingly complacent and sentimental glorification of the role the United States plays in maintaining global security, and *A New Deal for the World*, Elizabeth Borgwardt's more scholarly but, if anything, even more sentimental and self-regarding account of the American decision to put human rights at the center of the post–World War II international order, I wonder if that Macedonian official wasn't offering a far more moderate version of national self-love than what apparently passes for intelligent, dignified reflection in the United States these days about America's role in the world.

David Rieff is the author, most recently, of At the Point of a Gun: Democratic Dreams and Armed Intervention.

This unabashed self-love may not often be expressed as crudely as it was by the Bush supporter who, at a rally for the President during the 2004 campaign, waved a sign that read, "If Jesus hadn't been a Jew, he would have been an American." But there are advantages to crudeness, and the message of both of these books, for all that separates their authors intellectually and ideologically, is not so far removed from that boosterish proclamation. America, both Borgwardt and Mandelbaum suggest, really is exceptional, and after World War II it crafted a foreign policy that was and continues to be as much if not more in the world's interests than in its own. Mandelbaum's version of this is the cruder of the two. For him the United States is not just a benign colossus, much less an empire, a description he dismisses as "inaccurate." Instead, he makes an even larger claim.

Much of what passes for intelligent reflection on American power in this country is hard to distinguish from national self-love.

America, he writes, "acts as the world's government." Just as national governments provide essential services and what he calls "public goods," above all safety for their citizens, so the United States provides these same benefits throughout the world.

Mandelbaum does not go so far as to claim that America does this out of altruism. But while he acknowledges that self-interest plays a role, just as it did for the great empires of the past to which, he insists, the United States is so often wrongly compared, Mandelbaum's fundamental thesis is that by acting as a world government, America "reverses the distribution of benefits commonly attributed to empire." In an empire, he writes, "the imperial power has been seen as a predator, drawing economic profit and political gain from its control of the imperial possession, while the members of the society it controls suffer." But today, he argues, "it is the United States that pays and the rest of the world

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that benefits without having to pay."

If Mandelbaum is an unapologetic triumphalist, Borgwardt is an elegist who worries that in the aftermath of 9/11 the Bush Administration has turned its back on its commitment to generously provide the world with the same "New Deal" Roosevelt provided the citizens of the United States. Indeed, she seems even more persuaded than Mandelbaum of what Harold Hongju Koh, President Clinton's Assistant Secretary of State for human rights, described as America's "good exceptionalism." The largely American designers of the Bretton Woods, United Nations and Nuremberg charters, she argues, "actively struggled to redefine the idea of 'security' in the international sphere to include economic and political security, much as New Deal programs had redefined security domestically for individual American citizens." In this international context, Borgwardt insists, America all but single-handedly brought into being a new legal regime of human rights (Britain plays its usual Sancho Panza role in her narrative). For her, it has been the organizing principle of the post–cold war international order—a conceptual shift that fundamentally transformed the world for the better and is now in danger of being undone by the Bush Administration's return to pre-Rooseveltian unilateralism.

Whatever else can be said about their books, Borgwardt and Mandelbaum certainly offer an attractive vision of the United States' role and mission in the world. What for other, less enthralled observers might seem like a contradiction in terms is presented as the essential glory of the thing: The United States acts out of interests but is disinterested, acting for the global good even though, to be sure, that global good redounds to its benefit as well. Though Borgwardt is much less of a realist than Mandelbaum, and at times seems to suggest that what has been most admirable about the international order the United States ushered in after World War II is the degree to which it has transcended and even challenged its original purpose of safeguarding and maintaining American power, she is adamant that what was brought into being was "not only...a new American foreign policy but...a new vision for the world." Mandelbaum, more of a cost-benefit man himself, admits that "the United States intends what it does in the world to further its own interests." Nonetheless, he is no less adamant that America's role as world government "qualifies as a good deed of sorts."

After prolonged exposure to such sentiments, it is hard not to marvel at what a florid romance Americans make of America. To be sure, neither book is pure panegyric. Borgwardt, in particular, has written a fairly comprehensive scholarly account of the negotiations that brought about this American-inspired, American-dominated post–World War II order, focusing above all on what she calls the internationalization of justice (or "New Deal justice," to use her phrase) and an expanded, rights-based, multilateral understanding of American national interest. Some of this material will be familiar to people who have read Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley or Stephen Schlesinger on the US role in the founding of the United Nations, or Mary Ann Glendon on the crafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But Borgwardt's synthesis is on the whole both learned and accessible, despite the romantic and too often credulous quality of many of her judgments about American motives and the personalities involved. On this last point, it is dismaying to see a serious historian present FDR and Justice Robert Jackson largely in their *Sunrise at Campobello* and *Judgment at Nuremberg* (a piece of unadulterated kitsch that Borgwardt fulsomely praises and, worse, cites to buttress her arguments) Hollywood idealizations.

What liberal idealists and neoconservatives share is a view that the United States has a mission to reshape the world in its image.

There are also times when Borgwardt seems almost trapped by adherence to her organizing schema of the post–World War II settlement as the internationalization of the New Deal. Since her account of the New Deal itself is almost entirely devoid of criticism or even of much nuance (there is virtually no mention of capitalism in the book), it is hardly surprising that she so often falls into the trap of presenting the American debate as one between good, New Deal, human rights–loving multilateralist Democrats (plus Wendell Willkie and a few other enlightened Republicans) and bad, largely Republican isolationists and unilateralists whose malignant vision has supposedly prevailed under George W. Bush. The "war on terror," she writes, led the United States "to look almost exclusively to its own devices...in the process [America] pruned back its influence as a force promoting legitimacy, the rule of law, and, especially, international human rights."

Gardening metaphors aside, however true this may be of the Bush Administration's unilateralism, it is an unpromising place from which to analyze seriously the motives behind US foreign policy between 1942 and 1949. Above all, it leads Borgwardt consistently to downplay the relevance of what she recognizes as the US plan, consciously formulated by Roosevelt and his Cabinet, to become the dominant power of the post–World War II world. More precisely, it leads her to insist that whatever FDR's intention, the effect of his policies was to "remake the world in the image of the United States." By this, of course, Borgwardt means the "New Deal" United States, America at its best. She concedes that American exceptionalism has always been a two-edged sword, "with a dark side reflecting a penchant for double standards." But in the end, Borgwardt is one more American Hegelian (these days, they come in both liberal and neoconservative flavors), convinced that history is more likely than not moving inexorably toward a better and more democratic future. In the last sentence of her book, Borgwardt concludes that Winston Churchill's "'sunlit uplands' of history may still await."

I am grateful for that "may," but in the end it's not enough. Perhaps if Borgwardt had grappled with the question not of whether what she called Roosevelt's idea to "remake the world in the image of the United States" was successful but whether it was a good idea in the first place, the arguments she advances in *A New Deal for the World* would be more persuasive. She might at least have tipped her rhetorical hat toward the possibility that, as Walter Benjamin once put it, "every document of civilization is also a document of barbarism." And yes, that even includes the Atlantic Charter. But in the end, for all her commitments to multilateralism, she is as committed an American exceptionalist as Madeleine Albright, who famously said that the United States was the "indispensable nation"; Richard Holbrooke; Bill Clinton; Tony Blair, that foreign amanuensis to America's democratizing mission; or, oh yes, George W. Bush.

For, to a very large extent, the current mainstream policy debate in the United States revolves almost exclusively around what the proper modalities need to be to make what Borgwardt unself-consciously

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calls America's "moral right to lead" most effective in practice. Again, this illustrates the chasm that separates this American self-perception of the United States' role from the way that role is perceived in most of the rest of the world and, more basically still, the fact that in most of the rest of the world the notion that any nation could have such a license, at least on the basis of right rather than might, is generally viewed as risible special pleading. Indeed, it is at least partly because of the self-interested quality of Americans making an argument for America's special role in the world that many of the arguments in both Borgwardt's and Mandelbaum's books seemed to me to have something of the same quality as the boast of that Macedonian border guard I met almost a decade ago. They, too, are not praising the United States *only* because they are Americans. Given such shameless narcissism, is it really surprising that many people outside the United States have, rightly or wrongly, come to regard human rights less as a global revolution of moral concern, to use Michael Ignatieff's phrase, than as a flag of convenience for the maintenance of a global order in which the United States is the ultimate arbiter both of the rule sets and the outcomes?

And yet in the American mainstream, discussions of foreign relations rarely move beyond the self-regarding template. And Borgwardt's book is, alas, as much an emblem of this stiflingly conformist consensus as it is a scholarly call to arms for a "rollback" of the current Administration's positions on human rights, international law and multilateralism, and for a return to FDR's expansive and inclusive vision of US national interests. Like most American analysts, Borgwardt takes as a fact not only that the post–World War II order was based on rule sets and institutional arrangements that in effect exported "American values" such as human rights, the rule of law and free trade in what she calls "an integrated vision of 'security,'" but that this American decision unleashed a global transformation whose (overwhelmingly positive) effects are now beyond US control. In her brief for the enduring moral legacy of the Atlantic Charter, Borgwardt acknowledges the gap between FDR's advocacy of a rights-based universalism and America's own failings to live up to these ideals. But she is persuaded by the argument that by committing itself to such values, the United States in effect undertook to be bound by them. Approvingly, she quotes Robert Sherwood, Roosevelt's speechwriter, who remarked that "when you state a moral principle, you are stuck with it, no matter how many fingers you have kept crossed at the moment."

A skeptic might add that when you posit the fundamental benevolence of the liberal universalist order and identify the United States as guarantor of that order, as Borgwardt does, you are stuck with the prospect of a virtually untrammeled use of American power accompanying the virtually untrammeled exporting of American values, no matter how tightly wrapped in septic sheets of multilateral consultation that power may be. Under the circumstances, there is something disingenuous about claiming that George Bush's version of American exceptionalism, his so-called "hard Wilsonianism," is not at all what you had in mind. Realistically, the only way to do this is to insist, as Borgwardt does, that the issue is not, fundamentally, American universalism but rather multilateralism versus unilateralism. But again, in doing so Borgwardt glosses over the inconvenient fact of America's virtual global monopoly on so-called hard power, above all military force. It is all very well to define multilateralism as "solving problems in tandem with allies" and claiming that there is a correlation between unilateralism and "a lack of respect for human rights," but what does consultation mean when one nation holds (or at least sees itself as holding) all the trump cards? Democratic policy analysts who criticize the Bush Administration's unilateralism nonetheless routinely utter such revealing phrases as Albright's "indispensable nation" remark, or Richard Holbrooke's oft-repeated phrase that "the United Nations works best when the US leads."

One liberal blog calls itself Democracy Arsenal, seemingly unaware of how menacing such a phrase might sound in other countries.

To emphasize the essential continuities in American perceptions of the United States' role in the world is not to deny that there are differences between the liberal and conservative versions of the creed. For the Bush Administration, American leadership is a self-evident moral right. In contrast, liberals have tended to be more concerned with the benefits of reciprocity between the United States and other nations. But again, when all is said and done, both sides share the conviction that America has a special mission based on the universality of its values. Thus, one gets George Bush's self-described "moral clarity" about America's indispensable role in the world as guarantor and propagator of democracy on one side and on the other the liberal view, implicit in Borgwardt's book and more explicitly elaborated in Samantha Power's *"A Problem From Hell"*, that when all is said and done the United States could and should be the guarantor of an international order based on human rights. Talk about the narcissism of small differences!

Anyone wanting a sense of how pervasive this attitude is among Democratic Party policy analysts need only go to blogs like America Abroad or Democracy Arsenal, where the views of senior Clinton Administration officials like Ivo Daalder, James Steinberg and Morton Halperin, as well as figures touted for senior positions in a future Democratic administration—like Anne-Marie Slaughter, currently dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton—are open for inspection. The fact that a website purporting to represent a critique of the current Administration's foreign policy could be called Democracy Arsenal is itself illustrative. Obviously, those doing the naming were as enthralled by the memory of FDR as Borgwardt is, and meant to hark back to the days of World War II when America was just that. But the sheer parochialism of such a choice, not to mention the easy assumption about the intrinsic benignity of American power, takes one's breath away. Such a reference may seem anodyne in today's Washington. But did Halperin and his colleagues never stop to wonder how menacing that phrase might sound in New Delhi, or Johannesburg, or Jakarta, or Tehran... or London, Paris and Berlin for that matter? Surely, had they done so, they would have picked another name. Or perhaps not. Perhaps the power of American belief in American exceptionalism is now so deep-rooted in mainstream political thinking as to pass unnoticed and unexamined, like some geological fact.

And with Iraq illustrating the failure of the Bush Administration's go-it-alone approach, Democratic political analysts have been quick to point out that, with the exception of the post-9/11 Bush Administration, there is a fundamental continuity of approach in Washington on foreign policy issues. Posting on the America Abroad blog, Daalder, a Brookings Institution senior fellow who had previously agonized

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over whether the Bush Administration's missteps would imperil the otherwise laudable goal of pre-emption, wrote that there had been a "return to a foreign policy that is much more akin to the foreign policies pursued by the administration's predecessors," and that "the new strategy's twin pillars—of promoting human rights, freedom and democracy and of working together with our friends and allies—have been central pillars of American foreign policy for decades." This return to basics, Daalder insisted, "shifts the balance from emphasizing force to emphasizing diplomacy, from relying on America's unilateral power to relying on multilateral alliances and institutions, from stressing the need to ensure America's military preeminence to stressing the importance of enhancing our power by working with others." The significance of that word "enhancing" should not be lost on anyone.

Michael Mandelbaum is both of this party and outside it. His work as an academic theorist of US foreign policy has been less associated with liberal internationalism than with more neorealist justifications for American pre-eminence. In recent years, however, he seems to have become increasingly Wilsonian—itself, perhaps, a sign of these triumphalist, parochial times in America. Mandelbaum's previous book, which bore

SHORT TAKES

DIGGING TO AMERICA.

By Anne Tyler. Knopf. 277 pp. $24.95.

Toward the end of *Digging to America*, Maryam, the elegant widowed Iranian-American who forms the emotional heart of Anne Tyler's excellent new novel, wonders whether "every decision she had ever made had been geared toward preserving her outsiderness." Tyler has written an acutely observed physiological study of belonging and identity—to country, to family and to one's own self. In doing so she has created two utterly believable families: the Iranian Yazdans—Ziba, Sami and Sami's long-suffering mother, Maryam—and the unapologetically white middle-class Americans Brad and Bitsy Donaldson. Their lives unexpectedly intersect at Baltimore Airport as Bitsy and Ziba anxiously await the delivery of their adoptive Korean daughters, Jin-Ho and Susan. This date marks the beginning of a long, occasionally perplexing and ultimately rewarding friendship between the families, one that is punctuated by the annual and hilarious "Arrival Party"—an invented tradition that celebrates the anniversary of both daughters' arrival in America.

In a style reminiscent of a seventeenth-century novel Tyler shifts perspective between her characters, creating a complex interior landscape that explores the fraught yet rewarding ties of motherhood and family. Underlying Bitsy and Ziba's friendship is their shared infertility. In one touching moment Ziba tells Bitsy that "her parents believed that people who couldn't have children *shouldn't* have children." Bitsy covers "Ziba's hand with her own" and looks up: "Ziba's eyes had flooded suddenly with tears."

In *Digging to America*, her seventeenth novel, Tyler shows us how all people—American, Iranian, Korean—improvise their lives, fashioning a narrative to make sense of the bewildering circumstances in which they often find themselves. And as Maryam realizes, it is through recognizing our own struggle in those of others that we move from a sense of "outsiderness" to one of belonging. —*Ruth Baldwin*

BECOMING ABIGAIL.

By Chris Abani. Akashic. 119 pp. $11.95.

"And this. Even this. This memory like all the others was a lie." So begins Chris Abani's novella *Becoming Abigail*, a darkly poetic investigation into the past's deceptive hold over the present. The Abigail of the title refers to both Abani's heroine—a young Nigerian girl whose suicidal father sends her to England to live with a "cousin" who tries to force her into prostitution—and her mother, who died in childbirth and whose shadow touches every page.

The author of the novel *GraceLand* (2004) and an accomplished poet who was imprisoned in Nigeria for his writing and activism, Abani writes in dense, gorgeous prose in *Becoming Abigail*. Alternating between "Now" and "Then," the story shifts restlessly between the present moment in London and Abigail's childhood in Nigeria. Abani follows the trajectory of a woman who has never known the reassuring ceremony of everyday life: "Childhood. It was perhaps the one thing Abigail had never really had, and yet truly needed." This absence permeates *Becoming Abigail*, and it compels Abigail to create her own rituals—mapping moments of pain and pleasure in pointillist designs of cigarette burns across her skin. In the absence of memory, she becomes her own cartographer.

Abigail is not a creature of pity but inspiration; she is not diminished by her experiences but strengthened by them. For all the pain that she suffers, she retains a capacity for love. When she does—briefly—find real love, it too becomes a memory. But unlike her earlier imaginings of her mother, this memory is real. In recognizing that the pain of this final loss is irrevocable, Abigail at last takes control of her destiny.

—*R.B.*

KENSINGTON GARDENS.

By Rodrigo Fresán.
Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 370 pp. $25.

Rodrigo Fresán's first novel to be translated into English opens just as notoriously weird children's writer Peter Hook has kidnapped the child star of the film version of his famed Jim Yang series. Over the course of their long night together, Hook tells young Keiko Kai the life story of his hero and obsession, J.M. Barrie, the creator of *Peter Pan*. Bouncing among Victorian England, the swinging '60s of Hook's childhood and the present, Fresán beautifully and grandly captures the mind of a madman who's caught in an all-too-ordinary dilemma: A little boy who didn't want to grow up, Hook has now become something much more monstrous than an adult. A living ghost, ensnared in the overlap between Barrie's biography and the trauma of his past, he's a captive of his own wonderfully twisted psychedelic fantasies. He writes not "in order to be someone" but "to be someone else." And he can, because memory is "constructed out of what we remember, and also out of what we've decided to forget." Yet like the ticking clock buried in the belly of the crocodile that follows Captain Hook, time, marching on, catches up with him in the end.

—*Christine Smallwood*

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the unabashedly vulgar title *The Ideas That Conquered the World: Peace, Democracy and Free Markets in the Twenty-First Century*, is about the inexorable triumph of liberal (read: American) ideas. In this, Mandelbaum's view is much like that of Thomas Friedman in his earlier, more euphoric period of *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, where he unwisely asserted that globalization and Americanization were indistinguishable.

Friedman is one of the people Mandelbaum thanks in the book's acknowledgments, which is hardly a surprise, since they appear to share the same determinist outlook. *The Case for Goliath* is less triumphalist than *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* but just as insistent on the indispensable role the United States plays in the world. As Mandelbaum somewhat petulantly concludes, whatever the life span of America's role as "the world's government," "three things can be safely predicted: They [i.e., the rest of the world] will not pay for it; they will continue to criticize it; and they will miss it when it is gone."

That the Christian A. Herter Professor of American Foreign Policy at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies sees fit to indulge in such childish rhetoric—"and then I'll be dead and they'll be sorry!"—is not an insignificant illustration of the extent to which we are once more living in an age of faith. Of course, if one is talking seriously about history, such a contention is not only astonishingly self-regarding; it is also almost pure speculation. For there is no way of knowing at this point whether the United States will be regarded, after the passing of its hegemony, as a particularly benevolent hegemon, assuming onerous burdens largely for the sake of the greater global good. Mandelbaum writes with astonishing self-confidence about the three "dominant twenty-first century ideas"—free markets, peace and democracy. But in doing so, he behaves as if the history of the twenty-first century could, at century's beginning, already be known. Imagine the same argument being made in 1806 about the nineteenth century or in 1906 about the twentieth. This is not historical argument but rather special pleading for American hegemony. Above all, Mandelbaum's "case for Goliath" is based on a particularly pernicious sort of circular reasoning. On the one hand, he claims that the global dominance of the ideas of peace, democracy and free markets "owed a great deal to the power of the United States, which embraced and espoused them." But, he quickly adds, "the reverse was also true: American power rested in no small part on the dominance of these ideas."

This is pure Hegelian claptrap—America as the incarnation of the world spirit. We have grown accustomed to the authority such ideas enjoy in neoconservative circles. "The 'real movement' of history, it turns out," wrote one of the movement's godmothers, Gertrude Himmelfarb, in the umpteenth essay proclaiming Marxism dead and buried, "is fueled not by matter but by spirit, by the will to freedom." The neocons apparently discerned that will to freedom in Ahmad Chalabi and expected to find it in the streets of Baghdad and Basra. That they did not might be thought to suggest that there was more left to Marx's assertion that "life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life" than they might have wished to believe. Finding political analysis grounded, whether explicitly or implicitly, in the romantic twaddle of *Weltgeist* and *Zeitgeist* is bad enough coming from the utopian wing of the Bush Administration. But it seems even more incongruous when one encounters it embedded in the otherwise stolid prose of a scholar like Mandelbaum, who clearly prides himself on his hardheaded analytical approach to international relations. But there are times in *The Case for Goliath* when Mandelbaum seems to have more a bad case of idolatry than self-love, as, for example, when he writes that America's role in the world "has something in common with the sun's relationship to the rest of the solar system. Both confer benefits on the entities with which they are in regular contact. The sun keeps the planets in their orbits by the force of gravity and radiates the heat and light that make life possible on one of them. Similarly, the United States..." Well, you get the idea.

Michael Mandelbaum mystically likens the United States' role in the world to 'the sun's relationship to the rest of the solar system.'

Such purple passages aside, Mandelbaum's inspiration in writing the book seems to have been to examine the claim, frequently voiced on the streets of virtually every capital city on the globe (but, as Mandelbaum rightly points out, not in those capital's chanceries), that the world would be better off without the United States serving as the guarantor of global security and prosperity—or, as Mandelbaum puts it, as the world's government. It is a reasonable question. The problem is, from the book's opening page to its concluding one, *The Case for Goliath* so skews the analysis in America's favor that its conclusions seem all but foreordained. No matter how playfully they may have been intended, even Mandelbaum's choice of epigrams for many of his chapters, like W.S. Gilbert's "A policeman's lot is not a happy one" or Hilaire Belloc's "Always keep a-hold of nurse, for fear of finding something worse," serve to confirm that he has written an apologia for American hegemony rather than a serious anatomy of it.

Paradoxically, even after having weighted the scales to the extent he does, Mandelbaum's ultimate justification for believing in the benefits of continued US dominance of the global system is more negative than positive. In his book, he brandishes the fact that there has so far been no serious effort by other states to band together to create a counterweight to the United States as conclusive evidence that other countries realize how much they benefit from the current system and how much they would lose were America no longer to play its current role. Of course, a skeptic might reasonably retort that the century is still young. But even if Mandelbaum is right, it is hardly a ringing endorsement of American stewardship. As he concedes, "a proper judgment [of the Goliath role] depends ultimately not on whether this or that American foreign policy could be improved—many undoubtedly could—but rather on whether that role is preferable to the plausible alternative." And this, Mandelbaum asserts, "is not considerably better global governance but considerably less of it, and the consequences of less governance are not likely to be pleasant."

So it really is "always keep a-hold of nurse, for fear of finding something worse" and certainly not "Ain't nanny doing a swell job?" What Mandelbaum seems not to understand is that the snapshot he provides of "how America acts as the world's government in the 21st century" (to quote his subtitle) is based on a static image of a world that, in reality, is rapidly changing. While it once may have been true that it was up to the American public to decide whether or not the United States would act as a hyperpower, today such decisions are no longer exclusively within America's grace and favor. The rise of Asia, above all China, upon which the United States is already dependent

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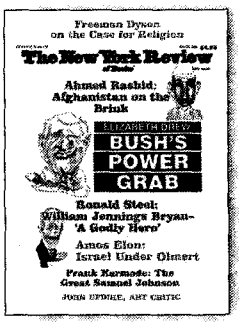
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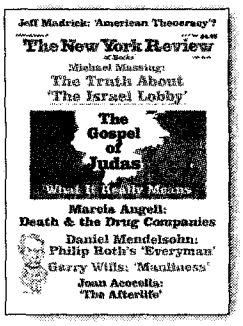
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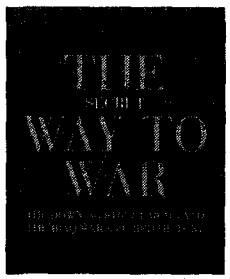

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for the stability of its own financial markets; the limits, well exhibited by events in both Iraq and North Korea, of what US military power can actually accomplish; and the challenge posed by the euro to the dollar's primacy as the world's reserve currency—all of these developments insure that the American-dominated system Mandelbaum extols, and about which his principal anxiety is that the *American* public will cease supporting it, is in fact coming apart at the seams already, only six years into the century in which America was to perform its historic role as "the world's government."

Of course, there may eventually be a domestic "mutiny" against America's world role based on competing domestic demands for resources. But Mandelbaum is sadly mistaken if he really imagines that the United States is still in a position to guarantee economic rule sets. Historically, this is not a role long accorded to debtors, and there is no reason to believe things have changed in this regard. On the geopolitical side, things are little better. Besides being an incontestable argument for proliferation for any state that is unprepared to do America's bidding, what the debacle in Iraq has demonstrated is how fragile American hegemony really is. America won the battles. Iran won the war. Such are the limits of hegemony these days. It also ducks a larger question that neither Mandelbaum nor Democratic policy analysts like Ivo Daalder and Anne-Marie Slaughter seem willing to consider, which is: Why do they believe the United States is and will continue to be the exception to what seems like one of the few iron laws of history—that a nation with overwhelming power at its disposal rarely behaves with forbearance and moderation for very long—when it has enjoyed such power for more than half a century already?

It would seem that it is waters of Nepenthe time in Washington these days. In other words, we are back to American exceptionalism... again. And there is a word for that, and that word is self-regard—an attitude that rarely turns out well for those unable to get past it. ■

The Poet and the Muse

MARK M. ANDERSON

RAINER MARIA RILKE AND LOU ANDREAS-SALOMÉ: The Correspondence.
Translated and annotated by Edward Snow and Michael Winkler. Norton. 424 pp. $39.95.

The legend preceded her: the Russian-German beauty, not yet 21, who so infatuated Friedrich Nietzsche that he proposed marriage to her before bitterly denouncing her and admonishing his followers to "not forget the whip" in their relations with women. Louise von Salomé was born in 1861 in St. Petersburg into a German-Baltic family and, like her contemporary Alma Mahler, made a career of subjugating talented men with her sexuality, intelligence and steely independence. Her conquests included her pastor in Russia (he 42, she 17), Nietzsche and Nietzsche's philosopher friend Paul Rée (with whom she lived in Berlin on the condition they not have sex), the gifted linguist and Armenian-German aristocrat Friedrich Carl Andreas (whom she married on the same condition) and, in platonically collegial fashion, Freud.

But Rilke was her biggest coup. She met the unknown German-speaking poet from Prague in 1897 when he was 21 and she, fifteen years his senior, already a well-known essayist and cultural personality. He began showering her with effusive love letters and precious verse that she initially ignored before finally "succumbing" and then quickly dominating him. They became lovers and constant companions for the next few years in a typically counter-cultural, proto-hippie, turn-of-the-century way, walking barefoot through the woods, eating fruit paps with yogurt, studying religion as an artistic experience and art as a form of religion. Tolstoy, whom they traveled to Russia to meet, was their patron saint.

Though Salomé was a formidable intellectual, novelist and practicing psychoanalyst, her most lasting contribution to European culture may well be her role as poetic midwife to the greatest German lyric poet since Hölderlin. It was she who recognized the makings of genius in the bundle of neuroses, preciosity and *über*-feeling that made up the young "René Rilke," helping him through various personal crises to accept the "Other" in his psyche without which he never would have forged the Modernist style of the *New Poems*, his novel *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* or his poetic masterpiece, the *Duino Elegies*. Soon after their first encounter she starts calling him by the "fine, German name" Rainer; teaches him to read Tolstoy and Pushkin in the original Russian; opens for him the doors to wealthy patrons, aristocrats and artists; and after their affair is over, continues to advise him about his love relationships, his diet, his choice of doctors, his writing. Denied as a lover, he grovels for a meeting, a word of advice, any sign of the woman he still sees as "the single bridge to [his] future." She responds by turning herself into the recipient of his increasingly disturbing depressions and hallucinatory states. "Write about how you feel and what's tormenting you," she counsels him in 1903, a full decade before studying psychoanalysis, "write it out of your system." She more than anyone is the person he wrote for, his first and only great love, his ideal reader. The printed dedication to his verse collection *The Book of Hours* (1905) reads simply "laid in the hands of Lou for all time."

The correspondence charts this mesmerizing act of poetic midwifery over three decades, from the Munich apartment of Jakob Wassermann, where they met, to Rilke's death in a Swiss clinic in December 1926. While Salomé lives a celibate life with her husband and beloved dog in Göttingen, Rilke travels compulsively throughout much of Western Europe, an itinerant monk or self-described "hunted animal" who goes from hotel room to rented apartment to patron's castle, always looking for that perfectly quiet, healthy and beautiful space in which he will finally be able to write as he wishes. Impeccably translated by Edward Snow and Michael Winkler, these letters provide a snapshot of European culture in the enormously fertile periods before and after World War I. Their circle of acquaintances is a veritable "Who's Who" of high society and artistic personalities, their reading matter eclectic and demanding: Baudelaire, Kierkegaard, Ellen Key, Georg Brandes ("more an amusement park than a human being"), Otto Weininger, Spengler, Proust, Valéry; psychoanalysis and spiritistic mediums; Italian Renaissance studies and con-

Mark M. Anderson, a professor of German at Columbia University, translated Thomas Bernhard's The Loser *under the pseudonym Jack Dawson.*

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temporary artist colonies. For all their self-absorbed focus on their work and bodily ailments, Rilke and Salomé keep each other apprised of what is innovative in high European culture (all of it helpfully glossed in well over 300 footnotes that by themselves are worth the price of the book).

The real interest of these letters lies, however, in the intimate portrait they give of a poet struggling to accomplish what he felt was his *Auftrag*, or "mission." Not every reader will appreciate the writers' pathos-laden and very German "high style." Much is insufferably long, self-indulgent or just plain obscure, and might have benefited from a pair of judicious editorial shears. On the other hand, without the full record of these exchanges, one cannot fully grasp the nature of this culture's relation to art or the intensity of Rilke's poetic ambition—ambition that left him little time to be with his daughter but required him to see the latest exhibition of paintings or to write a thank-you note to an aristocratic acquaintance. Throughout, his work remains the focus. "One must always work," Rodin admonished his young German secretary, and Rilke complied by writing poem after poem until he achieved the sculptural plasticity and objectivity he so admired in the French artist. In the process he became so absorbed by his art that his distant beloved had to beseech the famous poet for attention.

Salomé remains a cipher in these letters. She analyzes with increasingly Freudian rigor Rilke's childhood fears and artistic crises, yet she offers not a single explanation (or complaint) about her thirty-year marriage to a man with whom she refused to have sex. Rilke's life is laid out on a dissecting table, hers is kept veiled in the high-minded, self-effacing role of Muse. They last see each other in 1919, but their letters reach an emotional high point with his breakthrough of 1922, when he finishes the *Elegies* and composes the *Sonnets to Orpheus* in two miraculous weeks, which they both experience as the culmination of their relationship. His *Auftrag* accomplished, he acquiesces to the sickness that had been knocking at his body all his life. In the month leading up to his death, he refuses to let any visitors see him, not even his wife or his last lover; but "Lou must know everything," he tells his caretaker. All of the five letters she wrote to him the week before he died are lost; his last letter ends: "There is something malign blowing through the end of the year, something menacing," and then (in Russian), "farewell, my love, Y. Rainer." ■

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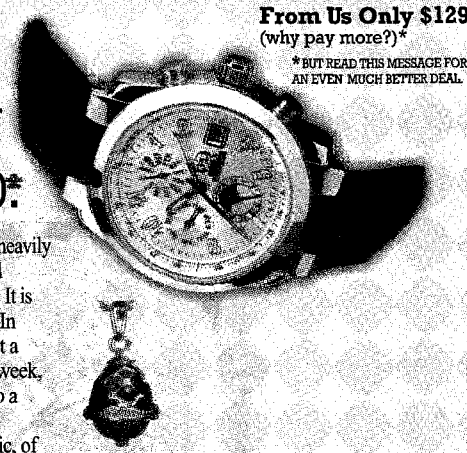

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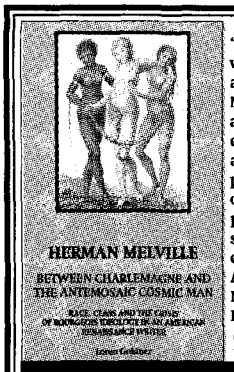

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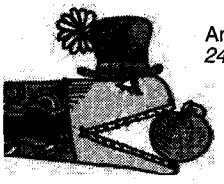

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FILMS

News of a Kidnapping

STUART KLAWANS

THE ROAD TO GUANTÁNAMO • CROSSING THE BRIDGE: THE SOUND OF ISTANBUL

A prisoner squats in the darkness of his cell, cowering under an assault of strobe lights and screeching music. You sit in the darkness of a theater, your imagination ripped open by flickering lights and a soundtrack mix. An interrogator makes up a cover identity for himself, tosses out misleading information, rattles his suspect with evidentiary photos that may not prove anything. A feature filmmaker invents characters, stretches truth to fit the plot, patches in news footage without regard to the original context (or shoots fictional scenes and makes them seem documentary).

Maybe I'm comparing apples to oranges here—or grenades to pineapples. But on the formal level at least, Michael Winterbottom and Mat Whitecross's *The Road to Guantánamo* mimics the actions of its most shadowy characters: the American officials who held captive and brutalized three young British men, all of Pakistani background, on the grounds that they were (as George W. Bush says) "bad people."

Since I greatly admire *The Road to Guantánamo* and hope millions of people will see it, I'd better be able to justify its use of the always dubious techniques of docudrama. So, to establish a base level of reality, I begin with a question: In what did the alleged badness of Asif Iqbal, Rhuhel Ahmed and Shafiq Rasul consist? Here are the facts of the case of the Tipton Three, as you may learn from sources such as the Center for Constitutional Rights.

In September 2001, shortly after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, 19-year-old Asif left his home in Tipton, outside Birmingham, and flew to Pakistan to prepare for his impending wedding. His friends Rhuhel and Shafiq soon joined him on vacation, along with a fourth buddy named Monir (later lost on the road and presumed dead). Though not unusually devout, the young men were religious enough to visit a mosque while knocking about Karachi; and there they heard, and responded to, an imam's call to support their fellow Muslims in Afghanistan, which was then facing American invasion.

It is not clear to me, either from my reading or from the film, what exactly Asif, Rhuhel and Shafiq thought they might do in Afghanistan: fight against the Americans, provide humanitarian aid or just look around. Considering their youth and history of recklessness (we'll get to that), they may not have had any clear idea themselves. What we do know, with reasonable certainty, is that they crossed the border, quickly realized they'd ventured into a scene of diarrhea-inducing chaos and then (once the bombs started to drop) discovered they had no sure way to leave. After a week or so, the swirl of events carried them from Kabul to the Taliban outpost of Kunduz. There, amid a horde of men surrendering to Northern Alliance forces, they were put onto a hellish transport to Shebargan Prison.

After that, things turned ugly. In late December 2001 US forces took possession of Asif, Rhuhel and Shafiq, who by mid-February 2002 were living in chain-link cages in Guantánamo, at Camp X-Ray. At its core, *The Road to Guantánamo* is a dramatization of the treatment the men claim to have received there, and subsequently at Camp Delta, from which they were at last released into British custody in March 2004. For more than two years, they had been kept imprisoned without any legal process, to be endlessly interrogated and (by any meaningful definition of the word) tortured—first on the possibility that they might know something about Al Qaeda, and then on the assumption that they were themselves Al Qaeda members. We may gauge the baselessness of these suspicions from the fact that the three are not still shut up in Camp Delta.

And what of the possibility that they'd wanted to take up weapons with the Taliban? We may judge the seriousness of that scenario by the fact that British authorities held Asif, Rhuhel and Shafiq for just one day of questioning in London before

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releasing them, without charges, back into the general population of Tipton.

So much for the facts. Now for the movie.

The Road to Guantánamo entwines three kinds of narration. The first consists of testimonies given straight into the camera by Asif, Rhuhel and Shafiq. They are in their mid-20s now, robust and bearded (the latter two in the flowing style of the pious). All three speak with quiet self-assurance, laughing incredulously more often than voicing anger—though you'll notice that Asif's eyes no longer work together well.

The film's second narrative strand is a dramatization of these testimonies, shot in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran and featuring previously untried young performers (Rizwan Ahmed, Farhad Harun, Waqar Siddiqui and Arfan Usman) playing the principal roles. These boyish actors, though thoroughly convincing, look nothing like the men you see in the interviews; and so the film subtly marks their scenes as re-creations, despite the immediacy and intensity of these episodes—the jostling market crowds and jouncing buses, the swarms of flies, the shiny new six-foot-square cages.

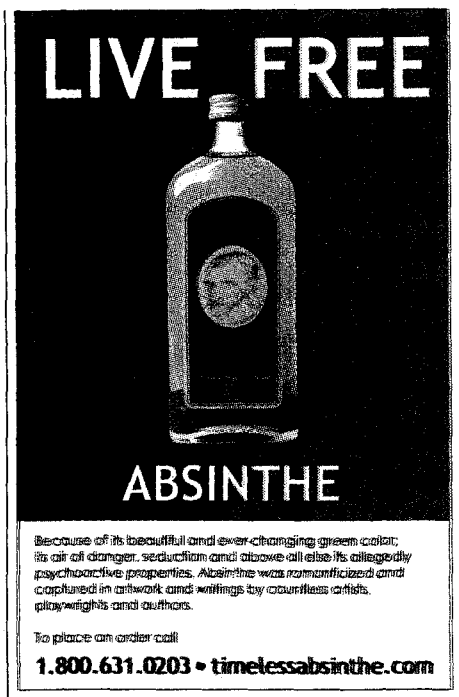
In style, these parts of the movie recall Winterbottom's remarkable 2002 film *In This World*, which re-created the journey of an Afghan boy, Jamal Udin Torabi, from a refugee camp in Pakistan to the streets of London. The probings and dartings of the hand-held camera, the unsettling rhythms of the editing, keep you caught up physically in the scenes, which tend to emphasize corporeal experience: how the characters washed, what they ate, where they went to the toilet. But for all that, you may remark during the episodes at Camp X-Ray and Camp Delta that you're not witnessing events but watching a reconstruction of them, based on the inmates' memories. You may wonder: Did the guards force prisoners to kneel in just this way, eating gravel while presenting their buttocks? When a five-man team in riot gear came to seize someone, did they quick-step as you see here, single-file, so they looked like a giant black caterpillar? We'll probably never know; the Guantánamo manual of procedure is not likely to be published. These visceral realizations may therefore be the closest we'll come to the truth, even though they are, admittedly, just realizations.

So *The Road to Guantánamo* establishes an implied distance between its fictionalizations and the facts—a distance that meanwhile keeps collapsing, due to the film's third type of narration: clips of news footage, and studio-produced voiceovers made to sound like a reporter's off-camera commentary. This material is the glue of the movie, sticking scenes together with a layer of information or a gloss of authenticity. The reportage, both fake and real, thickens the emotion (as does the film's other glue, the soundtrack music, which is the usual Winterbottom minimalism—like "Adagio for Strings" boiled down to syrup). It also adds a weight of objectivity to whatever you're seeing, no matter how subjective the underlying source.

Now, I don't have any problem with this approach—but then, neither am I the sort of person who denies that something awful has been going on at Guantánamo. Those who prefer to believe (despite all evidence to the contrary) that the abuses are minor and necessary—that Guantánamo holds only terrorists and their allies, who are treated no more roughly than they must be—may seize on Winterbottom and Whitecross's double game as an excuse to dismiss the whole movie. These critics (I'm sure they're out there) will insist this docudrama is culpable on both the formal and ethical levels.

Do the ends justify the means? That depends, I suppose, not only on the nature of the ends but on whether the means have a chance of achieving them. From documented facts, rather than docudrama, we know that the means used at Guantánamo, besides being repugnant in themselves, are wildly unlikely to deter the world's terrorists. By contrast, the means used in *The Road to Guantánamo* are both artful and effective.

Besides, if *The Road to Guantánamo* may be compared to an interrogator because of the tricks it practices—playing on the audience's suggestibility, for example, by compiling battle scenes out of a handful of night-scope images and a whole lot of sound effects—so too might it be likened in shadiness to the Tipton Three themselves. The young men's salvation, it turned out, was their history of run-ins with the law. "The police were our alibi," one of the men says with satisfaction, noting that he'd been reporting to his probation officer during the whole period when supposedly—so the interrogators said—he'd been off training in an Al Qaeda camp. It's possible for a well-timed misdemeanor to clear you of a hanging offense; and a bit of directorial fudging sometimes can make a film more rather than less ethical.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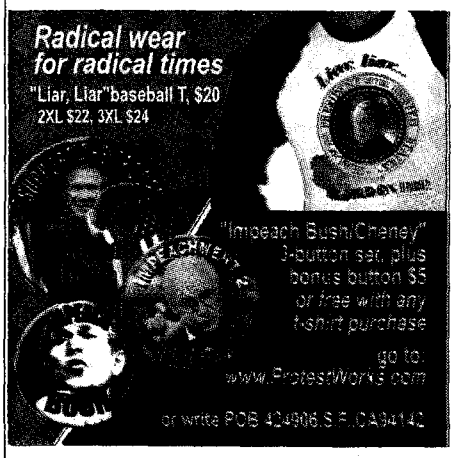
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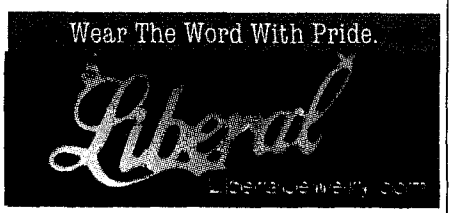

EVENTS

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NEW YORK

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■Read by Erin Cherry, Staceyann Chin, Deepa Fernandes, Amy Goodman, Josh Hamilton, Suheir Hammad, Brian Jones, Kristina Kirk, Robert Robideau, John Sayles, Wallace Shawn, Lili Taylor. Narrated by Anthony Arnove. *Voices* is the primary source companion to Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*. June 22, 8 PM. Ethical Culture Society, 2 West 64th Street, New York City. http://socialismconference.org/voices.shtml $15/$10 with conference registration. www.socialismconference.org, www.ticketcentral.com or (212) 279-4200.

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Winterbottom and Whitecross went to extraordinary lengths to tell the story of the Tipton Three, hauling their crew on a long, risky, dusty journey. That's the adventurous part, which made this production a road movie for the subjects and filmmakers alike. The defiant part has to do with a sense of quiet outrage that runs through the picture. Some of this tone comes from Asif, Rhuhel and Shafiq themselves, but some also comes from the filmmakers' clear determination to do justice to their story.

It's a story that goes far beyond the immediate characters. As Winterbottom and Whitecross show, the Tipton Three were kept at Guantánamo long after it had become obvious that they had no connection to terrorists. How many others, then, are still imprisoned, even though the jailers know they're guiltless? How many remain caged, or shut up in solitary confinement cells, only because the authorities don't want to admit they shouldn't have been kept at all?

Until we get an accounting, let's be grateful we've got the docudrama.

A travelogue, a party, a floating psychedelic jam session on the Bosporus, the documentary *Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul* plunges you into more than a dozen different versions of contemporary Turkish music and introduces you to their practitioners, from the celebrated and venerable (film and recording deities Orhan Gencebay and Sezen Aksu) to the young and unknown (the loose collective of street musicians known as Siyasiyabend).

Your guides are the German-born Turkish writer-director Fatih Akin (best known for the drama *Head On*) and the German composer and bass player Alexander Hacke, who serves as the film's on-camera investigator, recording technician and occasional side man. As you might guess, this creative team values Istanbul as the world's all-time capital of crossover. The filmmakers honor people like Selim Sesler and Aynur, whose deep-rooted gypsy and Kurdish musics were not so long ago despised, or banned. But they're also delighted with the Canadian folk singer Brenna MacCrimmon (who revived a trove of 1950s Turkish songs), Ceza (the liquid-tongued Turkish hip-hop virtuoso) and Duman (the Golden Horn's leading exponent of grunge rock).

"I only scratched the surface," Hacke says mournfully at the end, as he packs up his gear. But that, of course, is the whole point. ■

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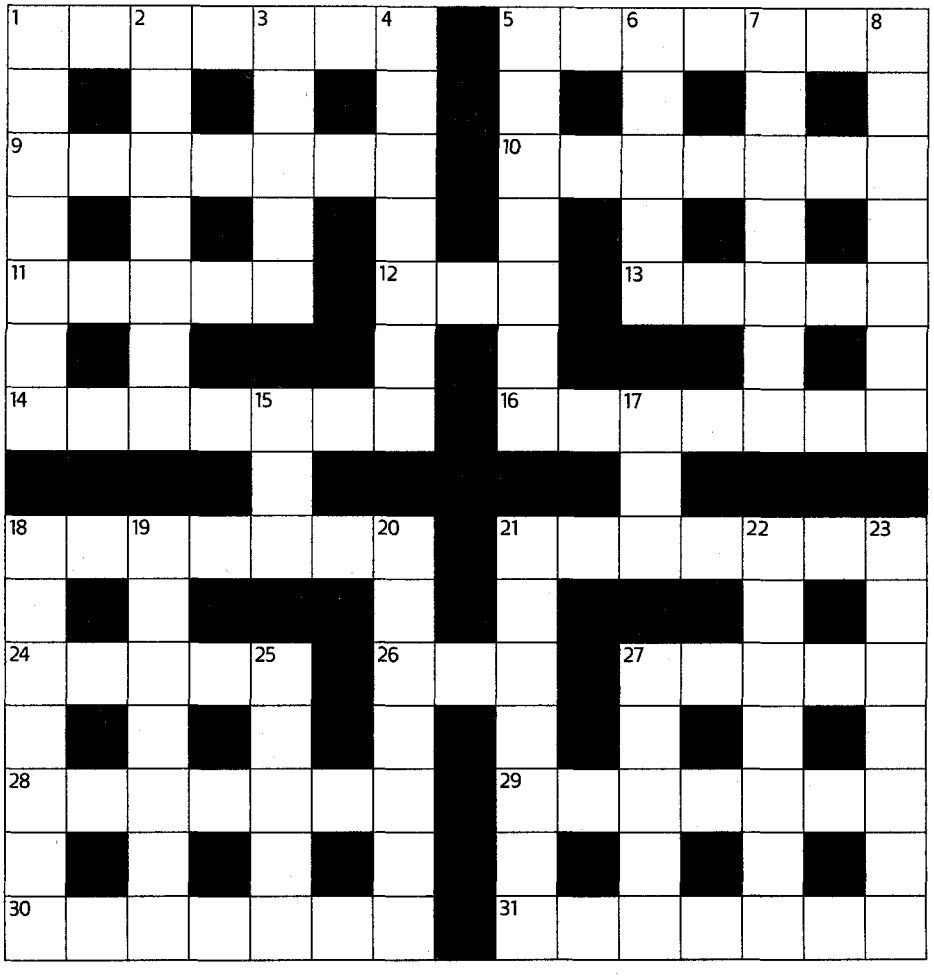

ACROSS

1 and **5** Is it the fumes from the mercury used in the business that makes one so comparatively crazy or just extremely angry? (2,3,2,1,6)

9 Is where one might find a tin can switched a logical place for a drink in a foreign country? (7)

10 Cow-catchers, possibly? (7)

11, 12 and **13** *O, the storks who,* confused, make an all-out effort! (Doggone the mechanism!) (5,3,5)

14 A file of documents, or sides thereof. (7)

16 Quite a few customary ways of doing things with flowers. (7)

18 In favor of action with such a word—like no man can serve two masters. (7)

21 Paul, for example, gets to drink around a sort of stop. (7)

24, 26 and **27** What one might expect after the armistice when all is still? (5,3,5)

28 The first person gets to exist with a rainstorm in a typical peninsula. (7)

29 The place where it's all right to get in a war with no right end? (7)

30 You and I objectively come back to dish out money? Hang on! (7)

31 One from a northern state implies the prosecutor gets right back to give a good hiding! (7)

DOWN

1 It's of little account to get utilized this way, as charged. (7)

2 Cuts the grass around the small hotel that only serves little fish. (7)

3 A lot of 15 wandering around? You get the general idea! (5)

4 and **20** Broadcast precipitation in the place where flowers grow, Dizzy! (14)

5 and **21** Everybody is healthy and nicely behaved, which is just about enough! (3,4,3,4)

6 Said to be comparatively straight, not necessarily taken with a bow. (5)

7 Beverage containers used in rotation about half of each? (3,4)

8 Sister's evidently upset, and puts up a struggle. (7)

15 The man that comes in an old-fashioned way, just in play! (3)

17 Such a step is relative 22 on the floor. (3)

18 How the weaselly type goes with tarts and flowers? (7)

19 Animals used in fighting in the old days. (7)

20 See 4

21 See 5 down

22 Holiday pictures? Possibly descriptive of Caesar's Gaul. (7)

23 Get on board, with the net result taking to the waters of 20. (7)

25 The upper-class type, just in case. (5)

27 It's not late, but hurry! (5)

CORRECTION: In Puzzle No. 3039, "lost music" in the clue to 23 should have read "*last* music." We're very sarry, and it won't hoppen again.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3040

H	O	R	S	D	O	E	U	V	R	E	S			
	R		Q		U		P		E		O		A	
A	D	J	U	S	T	M	E	N	T		L	I	L	Y
	I		A		E		N		R		D		L	
A	N	S	W	E	R	E	D		O	R	I	G	I	N
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	R	A	S	T	A		D	I	S	A	R	R	A	Y
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P	S	Y	C	H	I	C	S		E	L	I	Z	A	
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			T	A	K	E	S	T	H	E	C	A	K	E

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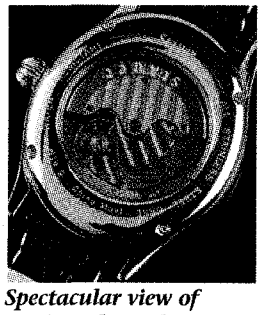

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—Salman Rushdie

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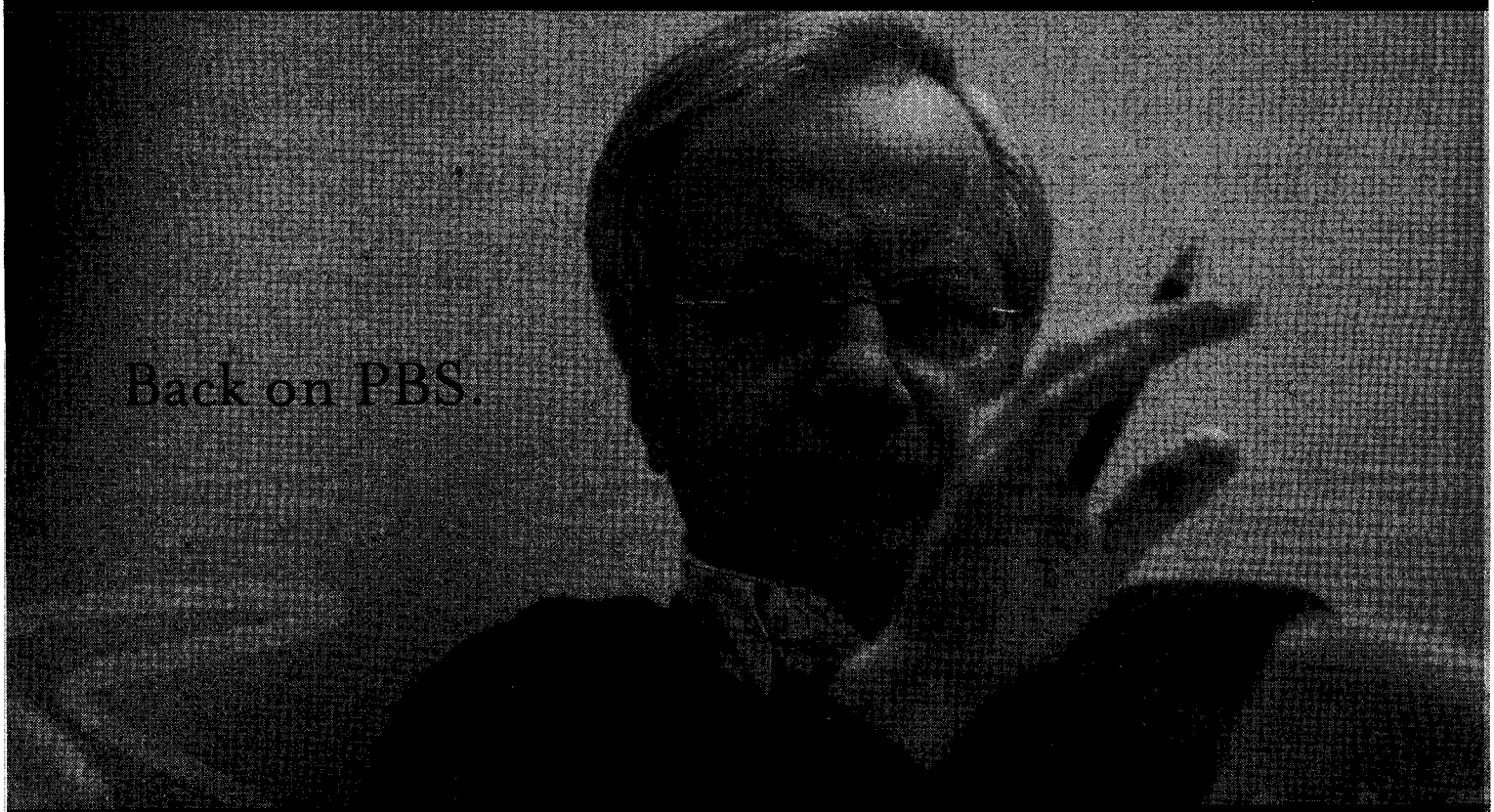
—Margaret Atwood

Bill Moyers on FAITH & REASON



Is the vision of religious tolerance just a utopian dream? Bill Moyers' new seven-part series, featuring provocative writers, including Margaret Atwood, David Grossman, Salman Rushdie, Richard Rodriguez, and Mary Gordon, wrestles with the hot-button issues of faith and reason.

Tune in this summer on PBS (check local listings)
Watch previews at pbs.org/billmoyers

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